THE

ADVENTUR

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF

SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH OF LE SAGE,

BY

T. SMOLLETT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

WITH ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.

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THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS

OF

SANTILLANE.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

GIL BLAS FINDS MEANS TO MAKE A CONSIDERABLE FORTUNE IN A VERY SHORT TIME, AND GIVES HIMSELF GREAT AIRS ACCORDINGLY.

THIS affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense, had enriched himself by books of knight-errantry. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats he obtained, through my means, a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the minister, properly speaking, had no business with

this affair, his Excellency, at my request, was so good as to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two-thirds of the lading belonged to a merchant of Lisbon, who having re-claimed it in vain, came to court in quest of a patron, who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles for my protection.

Methinks I hear the reader cry in this place, Bravo, Monsieur de Santillane; put hay into your boots; you are in a fine road; push your fortune. —Oh! that I will, I warrant you—I see, if I am not mistaken, my valet coming with a new prize, which he has grappled—Right; it is Scipio—let us hear him. "Signior, (said he) allow me to introduce this famous operator to you. He wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclusive of all others, during the space of ten years, in all the cities under the dominion of Spain; that is, all persons of his profession shall be prohibited from settling in the place or places where he resides; and he will pay, as an acknowledgment, two hundred pistoles to any person who will procure for him the said privilege." I said to the mountebank, assuming the patron, "Well, friend, your business shall be done." Sure enough, in a very few days

I dispatched him with patents, which entitled him to cheat the people exclusively, through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had obtained of his Excellency the four favours I had asked so easily, that I never hesitated in requesting a fifth, which was the government of the city of Vera, on the confines of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava,* who promised me a thousand pistoles for the place. The minister laughed to see me so hot on the game: "Egad, Gil Blas," said he, "you go on at a rare rate; you must be furiously inclined to oblige your neighbour. Hark'ye, I shall not stand upon trifles with you: but when you demand governments and other considerable favours, you shall, if you please, be contented with one half of the profit, and be accountable for the other to me. You can't imagine," added he, "what expence I am obliged to be at, or how many resources I must have to support the dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the disinterested appearance I assume, I confess I am not imprudent enough to disorder my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly."

* Calatrava, a military order of knighthood in Spain; instituted in the year 1158, during the reign of Sancho, the third king of Castile. This society has formerly signalised its zeal and courage in many battles against the infidels, and is still possessed of fifty-six commanderies, and sixteen priories. The habit of the order is a large white mantle, with a red cross on the left side, powdered with flowers de luce. The knights make a vow of poverty, obedience, and conjugal fidelity; and take an oath to maintain the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin.

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those who wanted favors at court should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another at the same price, for a knight of St. Jago.* I was not contented with making governors only, I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent. I was also willing that the clergy should feel my benevolence: I bestowed small benefices, canonships, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishoprics and archbishoprics, they were all in the gift of Don Roderigo de Calderona, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders, and viceroys; a plain proof that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts, of which we made such an honorable traffic, were not always the best qualified or most regular. We knew very well that the

* St. Jago, or St. James. This is the highest order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the twelfth century. They take an oath to defend the pilgrims that visit the tomb of St. James, at Compostella, from the insults of the Moors. They bear for arms a sword gules, the handles in form of a cross, powdered with flowers de luce, and their motto is *Sanguine Arabum.*

wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we resembled those misers who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates has reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of the prime minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner, bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation, and now wanted to get rid of it, by the advice of his baker. I engaged a coachman; and, as it is but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple honor of my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what put the finishing stroke to my pride, was the minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgment that remained; and I became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, when they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and well nigh believed myself the Duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it into my head that I should pass for such, or, perhaps, for one of his bastards, a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his Excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose I ordered Scipio to look

out for a skilful cook; and he found one who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanus,* of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines, and, after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening some of the principal clerks of the minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side, (for it was like master like man,) kept table also in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintance at my expense. But, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides, I looked upon this profusion like a young man, and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grist to the mill; and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had, for once, drove a nail in the wheel of Fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my vanity, but to make Fabricius an eye-witness of my pomp. I did not doubt that he was returned from Andalusia; and, that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing, that a Sicilian nobleman, of his

* Lucius Cassius Nomentanus, a famous epicure, that lived in the Augustan age, and ate up a vast fortune. He is upon honourable record in many places of Horace for his nice taste in sensuality.

acquaintance, expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nunnez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him to supper. "Yes, friend," said I to him, "this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides." "Is it possible," cried he, with great vivacity, "that I find thee again in such opulence? how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galiano! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless," added he, "followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy conduct; for it is by such prudent measures only that the stewards in great families become so rich."

I let Fabricius applaud himself as much as he pleased, for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano: after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service: but perceiving that my poet, while I made the detail, sung his recantation within himself, I said to him, "I forgive the Sicilian—between you and me I have more cause to rejoice than be sorry at his behaviour towards me. If the Count had not used me ill, I should have followed him to Sicily, where I should now be a servant, in expectation of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not be confidant to the Duke of Lerma." Nunnez

was so struck with these last words, that he continued some minutes incapable of uttering one syllable. Then breaking silence all of a sudden, "Did I understand you aright?" said he, "what! have you the confidence of the prime minister?" "I share it," I replied, "with Don Roderigo de Calderona, , and, in all appearance, I shall make great progress." "Truly, Signior de Santillane," said he, "I look upon you with admiration! You are capable of filling all sorts of employments. What talents you are master of! you have (to use the expression of our tennis-court) the universal tool; that is to say, you are qualified for every thing. Finally, Signior," added he, "I am overjoyed at your worship's prosperity." "O, the devil," said I, interrupting him, "Mr. Nunnez, truce with Signior and your worship; let us banish these terms, and live familiarly together." "Thou art in the right," he replied, "I ought not to look upon thee otherwise than usual, although thou art become rich. I will confess my weakness, I was dazzled when I understood thy happy fate. But that prejudice is now over, and I now behold thee again as my old friend Gil Blas."

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. "Gentlemen," said I to them, presenting Nunnez, "you shall sup with Signior Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of king Numa,* and writes in prose like a prodigy."

* The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests, in their processions, were composed by Numa.

Unluckily, I spoke to people who regarded poetry so little, that our author suffered on account of his profession. Scarce would they deign to favour him with a look. It was to no purpose that he said witty things, in order to attract their attention: they did not perceive the beauty of his sallies; and he was so much piqued at their want of taste, that he made use of his poetical licence, and, cunningly withdrawing from the company, disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to table, without so much as asking what was become of him.

Just as I had done dressing, next morning, and was going abroad, the poet of the Asturias entered my chamber, saying, "I ask pardon, my friend, for having so abruptly left thy clerks last night; but truly I was so much out of my element among them, that I could no longer endure my situation. A parcel of insolent fellows, with their self-sufficient starched airs! I can't comprehend how thou, who hast an acuteness of understanding, canst accommodate thyself to such stupid guests: this very day," added he, "I will bring hither fellows of wit and spirit." "I shall be obliged to thee," answered I, "and will entirely depend upon thy taste in the choice of them." "Thou art in the right," said he, "I promise thee superior geniuses, of the most entertaining characters. I will go this instant to a coffee-house where they meet, and bespeak them before they engage themselves elsewhere; for, happy is the man who can

have their company at dinner or supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humour."

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me one after another, characterizing each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that those wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works (as he said) deserved to be engraved in letters of gold. I received those gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vain-glorious. Though I had not laid my injunctions on Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee; my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One, with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a whit less arrogant. In the middle of supper they worried me with verse and prose, each, in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writings; one regaled me with a sonnet; another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read a criticism upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavouring, in his

turn, to give us an ode of Anacreon translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation denied his assertion, and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives: the debate still continued; until becoming furious, they got up and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lackeys, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which when we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public-house, without making the least apology for their impolite behaviour.

Nunnez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. "Well, friend," said I to him, "will you still extol your fellow-guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither a villainous set. I will henceforth keep to my clerks; don't talk to me of authors." "I will bring no more such," answered he; "thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe."

CHAP. X.

THE MORALS OF GIL BLAS ARE ENTIRELY CORRUPTED AT COURT. HE IS CHARGED WITH A COMMISSION BY THE COUNT DE LEMOS, AND ENGAGES IN AN INTRIGUE WITH THAT NOBLEMAN.

As soon as I was known to be in favor with the Duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning my antichamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my levee. Two kinds of company came thither; one, to buy my interest with the minister for favors; and the other, to move me, by supplications, to obtain for them what they wanted gratis. The first were sure of being heard and assisted; but with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint. Of consequence, I cured myself of my friendship also, and stript myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behaviour to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and after having expressed a great deal of friendship for , as he always did when we met, desired

me to ask of the Duke of Lerma a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me that the cavalier in whose behalf he solicited was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence: "I don't at all doubt," added Joseph, "that kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honor in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity." This was plainly telling me that he expected it for nothing; and though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to do what he desired. "I am charmed," answered I to Navarro, "that I have it in my power to show my lively gratitude for all the favors which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for any one is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon for him, depend upon it; the affair is now no longer yours, but mine."

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats, which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgment I might have expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said (with an air of mortification) when next we met, "Ah! my dear Navarro, you was

too late in speaking to me; I was prevented by Calderona, who has given away that same post; and I am quite in despair that I have no better news to entertain you with."

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever; but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For besides my being burthened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman, whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him two thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more by order of the duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day: he told me that he had at last gained his end, and entirely possessed the good graces of the prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was: he then gave me charge of a very honorable commission which he had already prepared for me. "Friend Santillane," said he, "now is the time to be doing: spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who should be worthy to amuse that gallant prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me." I promised to neglect nothing

in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people live by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of inquiry; but, not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private, "Child, I am going to entrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know, that in the midst of fortune's favors, I find I want something?" "I can easily guess what that is," said he, interrupting me before I could proceed; "you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and exhilarate your spirits; and truly it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave grey-beards cannot dispense with such recreation." "I admire thy penetration," answered I, with a smile; "yes, a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I must warn thee before-hand, that I am very delicate in these matters. I expect a lady of beauty and good morals." "What you require," replied Scipio, "is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair."

Sure enough, in three days he said, "I have discovered a treasure; a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honorable manner on their fortune, which is but small; they are

served by a chambermaid of my acquaintance, who has assured me, that though their door is shut to every body at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing to avoid scandal, by going in at night without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier who deserved to find the door unlatched; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place." "That's well," I replied, "but I am afraid the chambermaid imposes upon thee." "No, no," said he, "I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interrogated the neighbours, and conclude, from what they say, that Signiora Catalina is a Danaë, on whom you may descend, like another Jupiter, in a shower of gold." Prejudiced as I was against intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once; and as the chambermaid came next day and told Scipio that if I pleased I might be introduced that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither between eleven and twelve. The maid receiving me in the dark, took me by the hand and led me into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches. As soon as they perceived me, they got up and saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took them for persons of quality. The aunt (whose name was Signiora Mencia), though still agreeable, did not attract my attention, which was entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a goddess.

To examine her minutely, however, she could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had such graces, together with a tempting luscious air, as hindered the eye to perceive her defects.

Accordingly, I was disturbed at sight of her. I forgot that I came thither to perform the office of procurer, spoke in my own favor, and expressed myself like a man inspired by the most violent passions. The young lady, in whom I found three times more wit than she really had (so courteous did she seem), quite enchanted me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner: "Signior de Santillane, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favor by standing on ceremony; but don't imagine yourself the nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate."

This well-aimed shot frighted away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed made me recollect myself. I became

again, all of a sudden, the faithful agent of the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, replied to Signiora Mencia, "Madam, I am pleased with your frankness, which I intend to imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain." "Your refusal of my niece," replied the aunt coldly, was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of raillery." "I don't rally, indeed, madam," cried I; "nothing is more serious; I have orders to find out a lady who deserves to be honored with the private visits of the Prince of Spain; I find such a one in your house, and mark it for the scene accordingly."

Signiora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner: "If I was disposed to credit literally what you say, you must know that I am not of such a character as to rejoice in the infamous honor of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue disapproves—" "What a saint you are with your virtue!" said I, interrupting her; "you talk like one bred among silly citizens. Sure you joke, in pretending to consider things in a moral point of view; that would be stripping them of all their beauty: they must be surveyed with a carnal eye. Behold the heir apparent of Spain at the feet of

the happy Catalina, adoring and loading her with presents; and remember, that from her, perhaps, will spring a hero who will render his mother's name immortal as his own."

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the prince already in her chains, affected great indifference; so that I was obliged to invest the place anew, until at length Signiora Mencia, seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the chamade, and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles:—Imprimis, If the prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina's charms, shall be inflamed, and determine to honor her with a nocturnal visit, I shall take care to apprize the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose.—Item, The prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury in chief.

After this convention, the aunt and niece showed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behaviour, in consequence of which I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the courtiers of gallantry and the women who want their service. Had people observed me leave this house with

such marks of favor, they might have said, with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The Count de Lemos was overjoyed when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He told the ladies he did not at all doubt that the prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress which I had chosen for him, and that she, on her part, would have cause to be contented with such a lover: that the young prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper: in short, he assured them that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendants. This nobleman afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage, in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he sat me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new started adventure, and to desire he will send him a thousand pistoles to insure his success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed, concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio, but took to myself the honour of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. "Mr. Gil Blas," said the minister to me, with an air of raillery, "I am ravished to find, that, with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties; when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you." "My lord," I replied in the same tone, "I thank your grace for intending me the preference; but give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous of serving your Excellency in that manner. Signior Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it." The Duke smiled at my answer; then changing the discourse, asked if his nephew did not want money for his adventure? "Pardon me," said I, "he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles." "Very well," replied the minister, "carry them to him; bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the prince shall propose."

CHAP. XI.

THE PRIVATE VISIT AND PRESENTS WHICH THE PRINCE OF SPAIN MADE TO CATALINA.

I WENT that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who told me, "You could not come in better season. I have spoke to the prince: he has bit at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, in order to visit her. It is a thing determined, and our measures are taken accordingly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and give them that money which you have brought: for it is right to let them see that he is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive; besides, the bounty of princes ought to precede their intrigues. As you will accompany him, together with me," added he, "be sure of being at his couchée this evening. Your coach also (for I think it is proper we should use it) must wait for us near the palace about midnight."

I immediately repaired to the house, but did not see Catalina, who (they told me) was a-bed: so that I could only speak with Signiora Mencia, to whom I said, "Madam, pray excuse me for appearing in your house by day; but it is not in my power to do otherwise, for I must give you

notice that the Prince of Spain will be here this night; and here," added I, putting the bag of money in her hand, "is an offering which he sends to the temple [illegible] Cytherea, to render the divinities of the place p[illegible]itious. You see I have not engaged you in a bad affair." "I am very much obliged to you," she replied; "but tell me, Signior de Santillane, does the prince love music?" "He loves it," answered I, "to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delicately touched."

"So much the better!" cried she, in a transport of joy; "you give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration; she likewise dances perfectly well." "Heavens!" cried I in my turn, "what perfections, my good aunt! so many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune; one of these talents is sufficient for the purpose."

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the hour of the prince's couchée; then giving orders to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me that the prince, to get rid of his company the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of his being sick; but that he would rise again in an hour, and, by a back door, gain a private stair that led into the court-yard.

When he had informed me of what they had concerted together, he posted me in a place through

which he assured me they would pass; and there I danced attendance so long, that I began to think our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire of seeing Catalina; as [illegible] princes usually drop these sort of whims before they have satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether, when two men accosted me, whom having discerned to be those I expected, I conducted them to my coach, in which they seated themselves, while I got upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house. I then handed the prince and his companion out of the coach, and we walked towards the place for which we were bound. The gate opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though by way of distinction there was a small lamp fixed on the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall, where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay dishabille, so artfully disposed that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our prince would have been very well satisfied with Signiora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to

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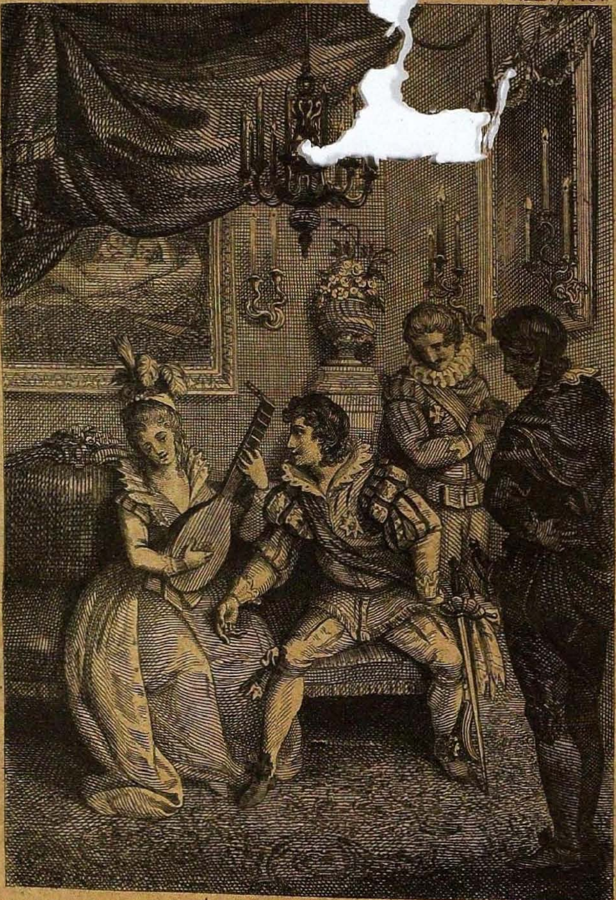

J. Smith, sc. 2 Clements Inn, Strand

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choose; but [illegible] charms of young Catalina, as they deserved [illegible] had the preference. "Well, my prince," said the Count de Lemos, "was it possible for us to proc[illegible] your highness the pleasure of seeing [illegible] "Noth[illegible] more handsome than these?" "I am ravished with them both!" replied the prince, "and I should never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail."

After this compliment so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honorable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with the intention of adding fuel to the fire, I told the gallant that his nymph sung and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung in such an affecting manner that the prince dropt down at her feet in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture, and only observe, that during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house because of the day's approach. We the gentlemen undertakers carried him back to his apartment with

great dispatch, and then went [illegible] our different homes, as well satisfied in having [illegible]tted him with a she-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounte[illegible]ture to the Duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, "The Prince of Spain is so much engrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he proposes to visit her often, and attach himself to her alone. He wanted to send to her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. 'My dear Lemos,' said he, 'you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well that I incommode, nay exhaust you, but my heart retains the obligation; and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude otherwise than in thought for all your friendship, you shall not repent for having laid me under an obligation.' "My prince," said I, leaving him that instant, "I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want."

"It is not difficult to satisfy his demand," said the duke to his nephew. "Santillane, go fetch the money; or, if you please, he will purchase the jewels, for he is a perfect connoisseur in stones, especially rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas?" added he, looking at me with a satirical

smile. "Your grace is very severe," I replied: "I see that you want to make Monsieur the Count merry at my expense." This happened accordingly. The nephew asked what mystery there was in his words? "Nothing," answered the Duke, laughing; "only Santillane one day thought proper to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found that he had gained neither honor nor profit by the bargain."

I should have thought myself easily quit, if the minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging, and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His Excellency, after having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's house, where we chose jewels, which we shewed to the prince for his approbation; and which being afterwards entrusted to me in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the duke's money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies, when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of a handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of ear-rings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable ac-

quaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a mere gipsey to our great monarch's son; but that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine master-piece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.

CHAP. XII.

CATALINA'S REAL CHARACTER. THE PERPLEXITY AND UNEASINESS OF GIL BLAS. THE PRECAUTION HE WAS OBLIGED TO TAKE FOR HIS OWN QUIET

JUST as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and enquiring into the cause, was told, Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sung full throat, and frequently broke out in loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the seven wise men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to the company, "Gentlemen, it is only my master come home: be not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I will go and speak two words to him, and rejoin you in a twinkling." So saying, he came to my apartment. "What a hubbub is this?" said I; "what sort of people are those you entertain below? are they poets?" "No, indeed, Sir, if you please," he replied; "it were pity to bestow your wine on such company. I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very rich young fellow, who wants for his money an employment by your interest, and for him alone I give this entertainment: at every draught he drinks, I raise the gratification you are to receive ten pistoles, and will make him drink

till day." "If that be the case," I replied, "go back to thy friends, and don't spare the wine in my cellar."

I did not think this a pro[illegible] season to talk with him about Catalina; b[illegible] next morning, when I got up, I spoke to him in this manner: "Friend Scipio, thou knowest how we live together; I treat thee more like a comrade than a domestic; and of consequence thou wilt be to blame in deceiving me as a master. Let us then lay aside all reserve with one another. I will tell thee something that will surprise thee, and thou shalt disclose to me thy real sentiments of these two women with whom thou hast made me acquainted. Between thee and me, I suspect them to be two artful pusses, cunning in proportion to the simplicity which they affect. If my opinion does them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be well pleased with me; for I confess it was for him that I wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried him to Catalina's house, and he is become passionately fond of her." "Signior," answered Scipio, "I am too well used by you, to be wanting in sincerity to my master. I had yesterday a private conversation with the maid of the two princesses, and she related their history, which to me seemed very diverting. You shall hear it in two words.

"Catalina is daughter to a poor gentleman of Arragon; and, finding herself at the age of fifteen an orphan, as handsome as poor, listened to

an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having served as a parent rather than a husband to her. She secured his fortune, consisting of some moveables, and three hundred pistoles in ready money; then joined herself to Signiora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though already in the wane. These two good friends lived together, and began to behave so as to attract the notice of justice; at which the ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned Toledo through vexation, and settled in Madrid, where they had lived about two years without visiting any person in the neighbourhood. But the best circumstance of the story is this—They have hired two small houses, separated only by a wall, having in the cellar a stair of communication from the one to the other. Signiora Mencia lives with a young maid-servant in one of these houses, and the commander's widow possesses the other, with an old duenna who passes for her grandmother; so that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a pupil under the wings of her grandame. When she acts the niece, she is called Catalina; and when she plays the grand-child, her name is Sirena."

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and, interrupting Scipio, said, "What do I hear? Alas! I am afraid that this cursed Arragonian is no other than the mistress of Calderona." "Truly," he replied "it is the same. I thought this piece of news would have given you pleasure." "Thou

art very much mistaken," answered I, "I have more cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it; dost thou not see the consequences?" "No, in faith," resumed Scipio; "what mischief can it produce? you are not sure that Don Rodrigo will discover what passes; and if you are afraid of his getting information, you have nothing to do but prepossess the minister in your favour, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if after this Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, he will perceive that his sole design is to injure you, out of a spirit of revenge."

Scipio, by this discourse, banished my fear; and, resolving to follow his advice, I informed the Duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favorite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on my old way, saying, that after all it was glorious for Calderona to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of Spain, and to be as well received by her as his highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his grace.

Imagining that by this precaution I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous

shelves that environed it, my fear vanished. I still accompanied the prince to the house of Catalina, alias the fair Sirena, who was artful enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

CHAP. XIII.

GIL BLAS CONTINUES TO ACT THE MAN OF CONSEQUENCE. HEARS NEWS OF HIS FAMILY, WHICH MAKE BUT SMALL IMPRESSION UPON HIM; AND QUARRELS WITH FABRICIUS.

I HAVE already observed, that in the morning my antichamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals, but I would not receive them *viva voce*; and according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to the solicitor, "Give in a memorial." I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who came to put me in mind of a year's rent being due. As for my butcher and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memorials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don't intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of the grandees, as if I had been a man in their sphere. If (for example) I had occasion to mention the Duke of Alva, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them, without ceremony, "Alva, and Medina Sidonia." In a word, I became so vain and

haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas! poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as enquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Asturias! I did not even think of you! The court is like the river Lethe, in making us forget our parents and friends when they are under misfortunes.

I no longer, therefore, remembered my family, when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a plebeian, I asked what he wanted with me? "How, Signior Gil Blas!" said he, "don't you remember me?" In vain I considered him attentively: I was obliged to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. "I am," he replied, "one of your old school-fellows, native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer, your uncle the canon's neighbour. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at Gallina Ciega.*"

"I have," said I, "but a confused idea of the amusements of my infancy: the business in which I have been engaged, since that time, has effaced them from my memory." "I am come," he resumed, "to Madrid, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent: and I heard it said that you was on a good footing at court, and already as

* Blind-man's buff.

rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on your good fortune; and will, at my return into the country, overwhelm your family with joy, by telling them such an agreeable piece of news."

I could not, in common decency, forbear asking in what situation he had left my father, mother, and uncle: but this piece of duty I performed so coldly, that the grocer had no great reason to admire the force of blood. He seemed shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and being a plain vulgar young fellow, said bluntly, "I thought you had more tenderness and sensibility for your relations. How coldly do you inquire into their circumstances! Know, that your father and mother are still at service; and the good canon Gil Perez, burthened with old age and infirmities, draws near his end. People ought to have some natural affection; and since you are in a condition to assist your parents, I advise you as a friend, to send two hundred pistoles yearly for their support: by which means you will make their life easy and happy, without any inconvenience to yourself." Instead of being moved by the picture which he drew of my family, I was disgusted at the liberty which he took in advising me, without being desired so to do. With a little more address, perhaps, he might have persuaded me; but his freedom had a contrary effect. He perceived my displeasure by my silence; and continuing his exhortation with more malice than charity, made

me lose my patience entirely. "Oh, this is too much!" cried I, in a passion; "Go, Mr. Muscada, and meddle with your own concerns: it becomes you well, indeed, to prescribe to me! I know my duty, on this occasion, better than you can teach me.' So saying, I pushed the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, however, did not fail of having some effect. I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and was melted accordingly. I recalled the care they had taken of my infancy and education: I considered the duty I owed to my parents, and my reflections were attended with some transports of acknowledgment; which, however, came to nothing; they were soon stifled by my ingratitude, and succeeded by profound oblivion. There are many parents who have children of the same stamp.

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed, entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and thoughtful; in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricio, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying, "Truly, Gil Blas, thou art grown out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let

me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and freedom of behaviour, which are the soul of friendship; on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealest from me thy secret views; nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew.

"You joke, sure!" said I with an air of indifference; "I can't perceive any change in myself." "Thy own eyes are no judges," answered he, "they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend. do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to knock at thy door in the morning, thou camest in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now, behold the difference! Thou art attended with half a score of lacqueys—I am obliged to wait in thy anti-chamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received? with a forced politeness, and air of importance; so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee on the footing of a comrade? No, Santillane, no, I can't put up with it. Farewel. Let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who censures thy behaviour, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself."

I felt myself more irritated than reclaimed by

his reproaches, and let him go without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion, at that time, the friendship of a poet was not of such value as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it; I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the king, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a similitude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I know not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the king, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectable personages. O fortune! how are thy favours usually dispensed! The stoic Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion, who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

SCIPIO ADVISES GIL BLAS TO MARRY, PROPOSES THE DAUGHTER OF A RICH AND NOTED GOLDSMITH FOR HIS WIFE: THE STEPS WHICH ARE TAKEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS ADVICE.

ONE evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day? "A masterpiece," he replied; "I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance." "The daughter of a goldsmith!" cried I, with an air of disdain; "Hast thou lost thy senses? How canst thou propose a wife from the city? One who has certainly merit, and is on a sure footing at court, ought to entertain more elevated views, methinks." "How, Sir!" replied Scipio, "sure you are not in earnest: consider that the male alone ennobles; and be not more delicate than a thousand noblemen, whose names I can mention. Do you know that the heiress in question is worth an hundred thousand ducats? Is not this a fine morsel of plate?" When I heard him talk of such a round sum, I became more tractable. "I yield," said I to my secretary;

"the dowry determines me: when shall I touch it?" "Softly, Sir," he replied; "a little patience: I must first communicate the proposal to the father, and obtain his consent." "Good!" said I, laughing heartily, "are you still thereabouts? I find the marriage is far advanced." "Farther than you imagine," answered he; "I want only an hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and will answer for his consent. But before we proceed, let us come to a composition, if you please. Suppose I procure for you those hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?" "Twenty thousand," I replied. "Heaven be praised," said he, "I limit the acknowledgment to ten thousand; for once you are more generous than I. To-morrow I will set this negociation on foot; and you may depend upon its success, otherwise I am but an ass." In effect, two days after, he said, "I have spoke to Signior Gabriel Salero the goldsmith; and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you for a son-in-law: and you shall have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear that your are in favour with the minister." "If that be the case," answered I to Scipio, "I shall be married very soon: but, a-propos! Hast thou seen the girl? is she handsome?" "Not so handsome as the dowry," said he: "between you and me, this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature; but, luckily, that you don't mind." "No, faith, my

child!" said I; "we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying, and look for beauty no where but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to centre in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect."

"This is not all," resumed Scipio, "Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night; and we have agreed that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only a simple guest: and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this you may see that he wants to study your temper, before he proceeds: so that you must be on your guard before him." "Zooks!" said I with an air of confidence, "let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I shall lose nothing by his scrutiny."

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another several times. He was an honest citizen, polite *hasta porfiar*,* as the saying is. He introduced me to Signiora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments, without infringing the treaty. I said a great many things, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

* Even to obstinacy.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowry, I know not. What a fine house did Signior Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru: that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honour to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night, I treated our goldsmith in my turn; and, as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, and who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts, to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mortal man in comparison of these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a

middling fortune: twenty thousad ducats a year, or so. Upon which, these greedy hunters of honors and riches cried, I was in the wrong; and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the prime minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and asked if he was pleased with my behaviour? "I am charmed with it!" replied the citizen; "the young man has won my heart. But, Signior Scipio," added he, "I conjure you, by our old acquaintance to speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know; tell me that of Signior de Santillane: Is he a gamester? is he rake? what is his vicious inclination? pray don't conceal it!" "You affront me, Signior Gabriel, by asking such a question," replied the mediator; "I am not so much in my master's interest as in yours. If he had any bad quality capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law? No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But between you and me, I know no other fault in, him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man." "So much the better," cried the goldsmith, "I am glad of it. Go, friend, assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the minister."

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation than I hastened to Salero's house, to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand by their behaviour towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His excellency received him very courteously, and assured him that he was very glad he had chosen for a son-in-law a man for whom he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed, that the tear stood in his eye: he clasped me in his arms at parting, and said, "My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married in eight days at farthest."

CHAP. II.

GIL BLAS, BY ACCIDENT, REMEMBERS DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA, AND DOES HIM A PIECE OF SERVICE, OUT OF VANITY.

THE order of my history requires that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the services which I did to Don Alphonso, my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now, and I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant, and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I reflected, that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honor. Addressing myself therefore to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son; and that having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the government of Valencia for either the one or the other. The minister answered, "With all my heart, Gil Blas: I love to see thee grateful and generous. Besides, I esteem the family thou speakest of: the Leyvas have been always good servants to the king, and well deserve that place. Thou mayest dispose of it at thy own pleasure: I give it thee for a nuptial

present." Ravished with my success, I went without loss of time, and desired Calderona to make out letters patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending in respectful silence, until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderona heard in their turns. His different behaviour to different people was very remarkable: he received some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honoured with a bow, and conducted them to his closet door. He put (to use the expression,) different shades of consideration in the civilities he shewed. On one hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship, that surprised me not

a little. "Ah! my dear colleague," cried he, "what affair procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? Is there any thing in which I can serve you?" I told him the cause of my visit; and he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done by the same hour next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of the antichamber, whither he never used to go, except with grandees, and there embraced me anew.

'What is the meaning of all this civility?' said I to myself, going out; 'what can it forebode? Sure Calderona meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous of gaining my friendship; or, feeling his favor on the decline, cultivates me with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf. I did not know which of those conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True, indeed, he bated a great deal of that politeness in his reception of other people who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and disobliging to every body. But all of them were sufficiently revenged, by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man in a very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial which he

said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did even not look at the cavalier, said to him in a surly tone, "What is your name, friend?" "I was called Francillo in my infancy," replied the cavalier very coolly; "since that time I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zuniga,* and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedrosa." Calderona, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavoured to excuse himself. "Signior," said he to the count, "I beg pardon if not knowing you"—"I want none of thy excuses," said Francillo with disdain; "I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayest, if thou wilt be vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet."

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke, and resolved to take care how I behaved to people in giving audience, and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it, by an express, to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which his excellency informed him that the king had named

* Zuniga, one of the most ancient families of Castile.

him to the government of Valencia.* I took no notice of the share I had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing myself with the hope of telling him, by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court to take the oaths for his employment.

* Valencia, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same name, is situated on the banks of the Guadalavira, about half a league from the sea. It is the see of an archbishop, and seat of an university, a place of great trade, and, on the whole, so agreeable as to have obtained the name of *Valencia la hermosa,* Valencia the beautiful. This country was formerly in possession of the Moors, from whom the city was taken, about the end of the eleventh century, by the famous Ruy Dias, surnamed the Cid.

CHAP. III.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE OE GIL BLAS, AND THE GREAT EVENT THAT RENDERED THEM USELESS.

Let us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony: Salero took off rich clothes for the bride, and I hired a chambermaid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of an hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I shewed great respect to the goldsmith and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and cit-like. observations I patiently listened. Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed into a great hall, where we were regaled with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which was not ill executed, although they had not chosen

the best hands of Madrid. Several gay airs, with which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us all in such good humour, that we began to form country dances. God knows how we performed, since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore; though I had no other principles of that art, than two or three lessonswhich I received from a coxcomb of a dancing-master who came to teach the pages, when I lived with the Marchioness of Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted ourselves, it being time for each to think of retiring, I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. "Adieu, my son," said Salero, embracing me; "I will wait on you to-morrow morning, with the dowry in good gold." "My dear father," I replied, "you shall be very welcome." Then wishing the family good night, I got into the coach that waited for me at the gate, and drove homewards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some a-horseback, others a-foot, armed with swords and carabines, surrounded the coach, and stopped it, crying, "in the king's name." They made me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-chaise, where the chief of these cavaliers mounting along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia. I soon guessed that my fellow-traveller was an honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen, that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me

any thing of the matter. I observed that perhaps he might be mistaken in the man. "No, no," said he, "I know my business better. You are Signior de Santillane; and you I have orders to conduct to the place for which we are bound." Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night, along Mancaranez, in profound silence; changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia,* where I was locked up in the tower.

* Segovia, a city of New Castile, about twelve leagues from Madrid; famous for its woollen manufacture; the tower that was built by the Moors; the mint, which surpasses all work of the same kind in Europe; and an aqueduct, built by the Emperor Trajan, which remains entire to this day, and is looked upon as one of the finest monuments of antiquity. It extends three thousand paces from one mountain to another; and is supported by one hundred and seventy-seven arches in two tiers, forming, as it were, a double bridge. This edifice is built of large hewn stones, so artfully joined without mortar or cement, that it remains undamaged to the present age: whereas the little improvements that are occasionally made upon it for the public use, seldom last longer than fifteen or twenty years.

CHAP. IV.

THE TREATMENT OF GIL BLAS IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH HE LEARNED THE CAUSE OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

THEY began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploring my condition, for, as yet, I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderona; nevertheless, though I suspected that he had discovered the whole, I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Sometimes I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his excellency; and sometimes I imagined that he himself was the cause of my misfortunes, for some political reasons that often induce ministers to use their favorites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated by these different conjectures, when the light of day, penetrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two sources of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned my-

self to my sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, gaoler as he was, he felt an emotion of pity. "Signior prisoner," said he; "don't despair. You must not be so sensible of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Mean while, eat the king's allowance with a good grace."

My comforter went out when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honor to my provision, which, to me, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the king's bounty, as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than assuage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the mean time, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in his hand approached me, saying, "Signior Gil Blas, behold one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrea de Tordesillas who lived with you at Granada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, while you was in favor with that prelate. You desired him, if you remember, to employ his credit in my behalf; and by his interest, I was named for an employment in Mexico: but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopt in the city of Alicant, where

I married the daughter of him who commanded the castle, and by a train of adventures which I shall recount to you by and by, I am now become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders to keep you from the speech of every living soul, to make you lie upon straw, and live upon bread and water only. But I have too much humanity not to pity your misfortunes; besides you have done me service; and my gratitude prevails over the orders which I have received. Far from being the instrument of that cruelty which they would exercise upon you, I intend to soften the rigour of your fate. Get up and follow me."

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my thanks, my understanding was so much disturbed, that I could not answer one word. I did not fail, however, to follow him through a court, and up a narrow stair, to a small room, quite a-top of the tower. I was not a little surprised when I entered this chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. "The victuals will be presently brought," said Tordesillas, "and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see from your window the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when

the violence of your grief shall be mellowed by time into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an excursion with your eyes over such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be assured of being well provided in linen, and other necessaries befitting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, comfortable diet, and be furnished with as many books as you choose to read. In a word, you shall be as well treated as a prisoner can be."

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging offers, I took courage, gave my gaoler a thousand thanks, told him that he recalled me to life by his generous behaviour, and that I wished I might ever again have an opportunity of shewing my gratitude. "And why not have an opportunity?" he replied, "Do you think you have lost your liberty for ever? You are mistaken; and I dare assure you, that you will be quit for a few months of imprisonment." "What say you, Signior Don Andrea?" cried I, "it seems then you know the cause of my misfortune." "I confess," said he, "I am not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil who brought you hither imparted the secret to me, and I shall now reveal it.

"He told me, that the king, being informed of your having in concert with the Duke de Lemos, carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady, had, to punish you both, exiled the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the rigour which you have ex-

perienced since your arrival." "And how," said I, "did this affair come to the knowledge of the king? it is that circumstance, in particular, of which I want to be informed." "And that circumstance," he replied, "is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who, in all likelihood, is himself ignorant of the matter."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron; an olla podrida* in another; and the third contained a turkey-powt on a marmalade of berengena.† When Tordesillas saw that we had every thing we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse, and having locked the door, we sat down at table, opposite to one another. "Let us begin," said he, "with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite, after a fast of two days." So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half starved; and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I balked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel

* Olla podrida, a dish composed of all sorts of food.

† Berengena, a kind of fruit, growing like a cucumber, and eaten, like French beans, with mutton, &c.

images which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper in vain exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellence of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I should have drank it without pleasure, at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such absence of thought, that when it was ended, I could not have repeated one word of what he said. He concluded, that he undertook too much in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying, "Signior de Santillane, I will leave you to your repose, or rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the king is naturally good: when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished." So saying, Mr. Keeper went down stairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off every thing, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.

A SERFO…

CHAP. V.

HIS REFLECTIONS BEFORE HE WENT TO SLEEP, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE NOISE THAT WAKED HIM.

I SPENT two hours at least in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. I am confined here, then, said I to myself, for having contributed to the pleasures of the heir apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that kind to so young a prince; for his tender years alone make me guilty. Had he been in a more advanced age, the king would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the prince, or that of the Duke of Lerma, who will doubtless revenge his nephew, the Count de Lemos? How then has the king discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.

Hither my doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects had been abandoned. My strong box! cried I, my dear riches! what is become of you, into whose hands are you fallen? alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were amassed! I painted to myself the disorder

that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favorable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapours of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep, and, probably, the day would have surprised me in this condition, had I not been waked, all of a sudden, by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompained with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and hearing no more, believed it was a dream; but in a moment my ear was struck again with the sound of the instrument, and the same voice, which sung the following verses:

> Ay de mi! un ano felice
> Parece un soplo ligero;
> Ferò sin dicha un instante
> Es un siglo de tormento.*

My sorrow was increased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. I have but too well experienced the truth of these words (said I); methinks the season of my

* Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze: but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.

prosperity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison. I relapsed into a terrible reverie, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the task, My lamentations, however, ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said; the Erema, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing, to my view, but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably, I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already half dressed, when Tordesillas came in, followed by an old woman servant who brought shirts and towels for my use. "Signior Gil Blas," said he, "here is linen: don't be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well," added he, "how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?" "I should have slept, perhaps, till now," answered I, "had I not been awaked by a voice, accompanied by a guitar." "The cavalier who has

disturbed your repose," said he, "is a state prisoner, whose chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one another. You will find a mutual consolation in each other's acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both."

I assured Don Andrea, that I was extremely sensible of his kindness in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day, and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprised me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold the most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by shewing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add to this, that Nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of understanding and valour; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sung in the night, for fear of incommoding me, notwithstanding my intreaties that he would not constrain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed

by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance, and became stronger and stronger every day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since, by our discourse, we aided one another reciprocally to bear our misfortunes with patience.

One afternoon entering his room, just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he placing himself on his bed's feet, played a very moving air, and sung words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him with a smile, "Signior Knight, these are words which you was never obliged to employ in your amours: you are too well qualified to find the women cruel." "You have too good an opinion of me," he replied; "I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften a heart which I believe harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who treated me with extreme rigour. I must entertain you with that story, by which you will also learn the cause of my misfortune."

CHAP. VI.

THE HISTORY OF DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS, AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTRO.

NOT much less than four years ago, I set out from Madrid for Coria, to visit Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I am. I was no sooner arrived at her house, than love began to invade my repose. The windows of my apartment faced the lattices of a lady who lived opposite to my aunt's house; and I could easily perceive her, by the assistance of the width of her grates, and the narrowness of the street. I did not neglect the opportunity; and found my neighbour so handsome, that I was enchanted at once. I expressed my passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she could not be mistaken. She perceived it accordingly; but was not at all disposed to pride herself in her observation, and still less to answer my coquetries.

I made inquiries about this dangerous person, who captivated hearts so suddenly, and learned that her name was Donna Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galistro, who possessed a rich manor a few leagues from Coria; that many matches had been in her offer; but her father rejected them all, because he was resolved to give her in marriage to his nephew Don Au-

gustin de Olighera; who, in the mean time, had the privilege of seeing and conversing with his cousin every day. I was not discouraged by this piece of information: on the contrary, it inflamed my passion; and the proud pleasure of supplanting a beloved rival, excited me, perhaps, even more than my love, to pursue my point. I continued then to address Helena with the most passionate looks: I supplicated her maid Felicia in the same language, in order to implore her assistance: I even talked on my fingers. But these gallantries were of no use. I made as little impression on the maid as on her mistress: they seemed equally cruel and inaccessible.

Since they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters, and set people to work to discover what acquaintances Felicia had in town. They got notice that an old gentlewoman, called Theodora, was her best friend, and that they often visited one another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I went to Theodora in person, and, by presents, engaged her in my interests. She espoused my cause, promised to procure for me a private conversation with her friend at her house, and kept her promise the very next day. "I am no longer unhappy," said I to Felicia, "since my misfortunes have excited your compassion. How much am I indebted to your friend, for having prevailed upon you to grant me the satisfaction of an interview!" "Signior," answered she, "Theodora can do any thing with me; she

has engaged me in your behalf; and if it be in my power to make you happy, you shall soon enjoy your wish; but with all my good will, I don't know that I can give you much assistance; for, not to flatter you, you have never formed a more difficult enterprise. You are in love with a lady, who is prepossessed in favor of another cavalier: and what sort of a lady! one so full of pride and dissimulation, that if, by dint of perseverance and assiduity, you should succeed so far as to cost her some sighs, don't imagine that her pride will give you the pleasure of hearing them." "Ah! my dear Felicia!" cried I, in a transport of grief, "why do you describe the obstacles which I have to surmount! I am assassinated by your information! deceive me, rather than drive me to despair!" So saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it to mine, put upon her finger a diamond worth three hundred pistoles, accompanied with such moving expressions as brought the tears into her eyes.

She was too much affected by my discourse, and too well satisfied with my behaviour, to leave me altogether without consolation. She began to smooth the difficulties a little, saying, "Signior, what I have represented ought not to deprive you of hope. Your rival, it is true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come and visit his cousin, and talk to her whenever he pleases; and this is a circumstance favorable for you. Their being accustomed to see one another every day, renders their con-

versation a little languid: they seem to part without pain, and meet again without pleasure: one would think they are already married. In a word, I don't perceive that my mistress has a violent passion for Don Augustin: besides, as to personal qualifications, there is a difference between you and him that must turn to your account, in the eyes of such a delicate young lady as Donna Helena. Be not discouraged, therefore; continue your gallantry, which I will second; and I will not let slip one opportunity of making every thing you do to please her, tend to your advantage with my mistress. In vain shall she attempt to disguise her sentiments. I will soon discover them, in spite of her dissimulation."

After this conversation, Felicia and I parted, very well satisfied with one another. I prepared anew to ogle Don George's daughter, whom I treated with a serenade, in which the verses you have heard were sung by a fine voice, which I had provided for the purpose. After the concert, the maid, in order to sound her mistress, asked how she had been entertained? "The voice," said Donna Helena, "gave me pleasure." "And were not the words which were sung very moving?" replied the maid. "I paid no attention to them," said the lady; "I listened to the tune only; I took no notice of the verses, neither do I desire to know who gave the serenade." "If that be the case," cried the waiting-woman, "poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his reckoning, and not very

wise in spending his time in looking at our lattices." "Perhaps it may not be he," said the mistress, coldly, "but some other cavalier, who has declared his passion for me by this concert." "Pardon me, madam," replied Felicia, "it is no other but Don Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me this morning in the street, and begged me to tell you that he adores you, in spite of the rigor with which you repay his love; and that, in short, he would think himself the happiest of mankind if you would allow him to manifest his passion in the usual course of gallantry. This discourse," added she, "sufficiently proves that I am not mistaken."

Don George's daughter changed countenance all of a sudden, and darting a severe look at her maid, "You might have dispensed," said she, "with repeating that impertinent conversation to me. Let me have no such reports for the future, if you please: and if that rash youth shall have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to make his addresses to one who will regard his gallantry more than I do, and to choose a more honorable pastime than that of being all day long at his windows, to observe what I do in my apartment."

All this was faithfully reported to me, in a second interview with Felicia, who, pretending that I must not take the words of her mistress in a literal sense, would have persuaded me that the affair went on swimmingly. But I, who was igno-

rant of finesse, and did not believe that the text could be explained in my favor, distrusted the commentary she made. She laughed at my diffidence, called for paper and ink, and said, "Signior knight, write immediately to Donna Helena in the style of a desponding lover. Paint your sufferings in the most passionate colors, and, in particular, complain of her prohibiting you to appear at your windows. Promise to obey her, but at the same time assure her that it will cost you your life. Put this into such expressions as you gentlemen are so well skilled in, and leave the rest to me. I hope the event will do more honor to my penetration than you imagine."

Had I neglected this, I should have been the first lover who did not take the advantage of such an opportunity to write to his mistress. I composed a most pathetic letter, and before I sealed it, showed it to Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a smile, "that if women have the art of captivating the men, these last, in return, know very well how to cajole the women." The waiting-maid took my letter, then laying strong injunctions on me to keep my windows shut for a few days, returned to the house of Don George.

"Madam," said she to Donna Helena, when she went home, "I met Don Gaston, who did not fail to make up to me, and endeavoured to sooth me with flattering expressions. He asked, with a faltering voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had delivered his message to you.

Then I, faithful and ready to execute your orders, cut him short with a vengeance, inveighed against him, loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street confounded at my petulance." "I am overjoyed," replied Donna Helena, "that you have rid me of that importunate young fellow; but there was no occasion to speak rudely to him. A young woman ought always to be gentle in her behaviour." "Madam," said the maid, "a passionate lover is not to be banished by words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay, this is seldom accomplished by indignation and rage. Don Gaston, for example, was not repulsed. After having loaded him with reproaches, (as I have said,) I went to the house of your relation, whither you sent me; and that lady unfortunately detained me too long: I say too long, because, on my return, I found my man again, whom, I assure you, I did not expect to see. I was so much disturbed at sight of him, that my tongue, which never failed me before, could not furnish me with one syllable. In the mean time, what does he? he slipt a paper into my hand, which I kept, without knowing what I did, and then disappeared in an instant."

So saying, she pulled my letter out of her bosom, and gave, by way of joke, to her mistress, who taking it as for diversion, read it over, and then affected reserve. "Truly, Felicia," said she, with a serious air, "you are a fool and a mad creature to receive this billet. What will Don Gaston think of it? and what must I believe? Your con-

duct gives me cause to distrust your fidelity, and may make him suspect that I am pleased with his passion. Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this instant, that I peruse with pleasure the characters which he has wrote. You see to what shame you have exposed my pride." "O! not at all, madam," replied the maid; "he can entertain no such thoughts: and suppose he did, he shall not preserve them long. I will tell him, when I next see him, that I have shewn his letter to you; that you looked at it with indifference; and, in short, without reading it, tore it with the most mortifying contempt."

"You may safely swear that I have not read it," said Donna Helena: "I should be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single words of it." Don George's daughter was not contented with talking in this manner; she tore my billet, and forbid her woman to talk to me for the future.

As I promised to play the gallant no more at my windows, since the sight of me gave offence, I kept them shut several days, to render my obedience more affecting; but to supply these looks of which I was abridged, I prepared new serenades for my cruel Helen. One night I repaired under her balcony with musicians, and the guitars were already struck up, when a cavalier came sword in hand, and disturbed the concert, laying about him at a furious rate among the performers, who immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage which animated that bold intruder, awaked mine:

I advanced to punish him, and an obstinate combat began. Donna Helena and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries: these, as well as several people in the neighbourhood, came running to part the combatants; but they arrived too late, and found nobody in the field of battle but a cavalier, almost without life, weltering in his own blood; and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Every body pitied my fate, and Donna Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning with her maid, and in cursing her cousin, Don Augustin de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favored my flame, had committed this action, to show that he was not quite so passive as she believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon

forgotten by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life, but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me in marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustin as a man whom perhaps he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies to be a new comer in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love, and obtained of Signior Don George the permission of speaking to his daughter, in presence of her maid. What a delightful conversation this was! I entreated, I pressed the lady in such a manner to tell me if her father, in yielding her to my tenderness, had done any violence to her inclination, that she owned I was not beholden to her obedience alone. After this charming confession, my whole study

was to please her, and contrive entertainments, until the day of our nuptials, which were to be celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighbourhood intended to appear.

I gave a grand entertainment to Don George and his daughter, with all his relations and friends, at a superb country-house which my aunt had without the town, on the side of Manroi. Here a concert of vocal and instrumental music was prepared by my order, together with a company of strollers to represent a comedy. In the middle of the feast, one came and whispered to me, that there was a man in the hall who wanted to speak with me. I got up from table to see who it was, and found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and who presented to me a letter, which I opened, and read these words:

"If you have a regard for your honor, as every knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to be to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi, where you will find a cavalier ready to give satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and to put you, if he can, out of condition to espouse Donna Helena.

"Don Augustin de Olighera."

If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don

Augustin kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the feast, and said to the man who brought the letter, "Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning before sun-rise at the appointed place."

Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared, during the rest of the day, as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town in the same manner as he had come out. As for my part, I staid in the country-house, on pretence of taking the air next morning; but the true reason was, that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I waited with impatience for day, which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone, as if I intended to take a ride in the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered in the plain a man on horseback coming towards me at full speed; upon which I put spurs to my horse, to save him one half of the way. We

soon met, and I found it was my rival. "Knight," said he, in an insolent tone; "it is with regret that I come to blows with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have renounced Don George's daughter with a good grace; or at least take it for granted, that you would not be so easily quit if you persisted in your addresses to her." "You are too proud," answered I, "of an advantage which perhaps you owed more to the darkness of the night, than to your superior skill. You don't consider that the success of these rencounters depends often on accident." "It is never accidental with me," said he with an arrogant air; "and I will now shew you, that, by day as well as night, I know how to punish those audacious knights who interfere with me."

I made no reply to this haughty speech, but alighted instantly; Don Augustin did the same: we tied our horses to a tree, and began to fight with equal vigour. I will frankly own, that I had to do with an enemy who pushed much better than I, although I had been two years at school. He was a complete fencer; I could not possibly have exposed my life to greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens that the strongest is vanquished by the weakest, my rival, in spite of all his skill, received a thrust that went through his heart, and fell stone dead in an instant.

I returned immediately to the country-house, where I informed a valet de chambre, whom I

could trust, of what had happened, and said to him, "Dear Ramira, before justice can take cognizance of this event, take a good horse, and give my aunt notice of the adventure. Ask of her some money and jewels, and bring them to me at Plazencia, where thou wilt find me in the first inn you come to as you enter the city."

Ramira acquitted himself of his commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Plazencia three hours after me. He told me that Donna Eleonora was more pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel that revenged the affront which I had received in the first; and that she had sent me all her ready money and jewels, to enable me to travel agreeably in foreign countries, until she should get the affair accommodated.

To pass over superfluous circumstances, I will only inform you, that I crossed New Castile to the kingdom of Valencia, in order to embark at Denia, from whence I took passage for Italy, where I put myself in a condition to visit different countries, and appear in a suitable character.

While far from my Helen, I endeavoured as much as in me lay to beguile my love and sorrows: she mourned my absence in secret at Coria. Instead of approving of the prosecution that her family set on foot against me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that all enmity might cease, and my return be hastened by a speedy accommodation. Six months had already elapsed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy

would have still triumphed over time, had she had nothing else but time to combat; but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western side of Galicia, came to Coria to take possession of a rich estate which had been in vain disputed by his cousin Don Minguel de Caprara; and he settled in that country, finding it more agreeable than his own. Combados was well made, had an agreeable polite behaviour, and was one of the most insinuating men in this world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity: he longed to see such a formidable lady. For this purpose, he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law; gave him admittance to his house, and the liberty of speaking in his presence to Donna Helena. The Galician soon fell in love with her. That was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his proposal; but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia, however, was in the

interest of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chambermaid by his remonstrances; and nevertheless, all their efforts, during a whole year, could only torment Donna Helena, without shaking her constancy in the least.

Combados, seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves for him in vain, proposed an expedient to overcome the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as she was. "This," said he, "is what I have contrived; we will only suppose that a merchant of Coria has received a letter from an Italian factor, in which, after a detail of things concerning commerce, are the following words:

—"A Spanish cavalier, whose name is Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He calls himself nephew and sole heir of a rich widow who lives at Coria, under the name of Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. He has demanded the daughter of a powerful nobleman in marriage, but will not succeed until the truth is known. I am desired to apply to you for this purpose: pray let me know then if you are acquainted with this Don Gaston, and in what the riches of his aunt consist; for your answer will decide the marriage.

"PARMA, &c."

The old man looked upon this trick as a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in love; and the waiting woman, still less scrupulous than her master, approved of it very much. The invention seemed to them the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and, to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena, "Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustin into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your fidelity to him: he is a fickle perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter, which a merchant of Coria has received from Italy." Helena trembling took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunderstruck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears: but, soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father in a resolute tone, "Signior, you have been witness of my weakness, bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. It is done. I now despise Don

Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of mankind. But let us talk no more about him. Come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar; let my marriage precede that of the perfidious man who has so ill repaid my love." Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter, applauded her vigorous resolution, and, glad of the happy success of his stratagem, made haste to complete the wishes of my rival.

Donna Helena was thus ravished from me. She yielded herself suddenly to Combados, without listening to love, which at the bottom of her heart spoke in my behalf, or even doubting a moment of a piece of news which might have been suspected in a lover of less credulity. The haughty maid listened to nothing but her pride; and the resentment of the injury which she thought her beauty had received, prevailed over her tenderness. A few days after her marriage, however, she felt some remorse for having been so precipitate. She reflected that the merchant's letter might have been feigned, and that suspicion gave her some uneasiness; but the amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her repose. His sole study was to amuse her; and in this he succeeded by a continual succession of various pleasures, which he had art enough to invent.

She seemed very well satisfied with such a gallant husband, and they lived together in perfect harmony, when my aunt accommodated my affair

with the relations of Don Augustin, and wrote immediately to Italy to advertise me of her success. Being then at Regio, in the farthermost part of Calabria, I went over into Sicily, from thence to Spain, and at length repaired to Coria on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora, who had not in her letter mentioned the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival; and observing that I was afflicted at the news, "You are in the wrong, nephew," said she, "to be so much grieved at the loss of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice, and banish from your memory a person unworthy of possessing a place in it."

As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit which had been practised on Donna Helena, she was in the right to talk in this manner, and could not have given me a more prudent advice; which therefore I promised to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I should find myself incapable of vanquishing my passion. I could not, however, resist my curiosity to know how this marriage had been made; and to be informed of all the particulars, I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend, Dame Theodora, whom I have mentioned before. I went to her house, and there by accident found Felicia, who, expecting nothing less than to see me, was confounded, and endeavoured to go away, that she might avoid an explanation which she concluded I would demand. I stopt her, saying, "Why do you fly me? Is not the

perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? Has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman, of having refused me the hearing?"

"Signior," answered the waiting woman, "I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again, without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accomplice in seducing her." "O heaven!" cried I, "have you the presumption to tell me so? Explain yourself immediately." Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to give me some consolation; she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigour of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

I pass over the infinite contradictions she underwent, before she could prevail upon Donna Helena to see me. This, however, she accomplished; and it was concerted between them that I should be privately admitted into the house of Don Blas, the first time that he should go to an estate where he usually spent a day or two in hunting. The design was soon put in execution:

the husband set out for the country; I was informed of the occasion, and one night introduced into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation with reproaches; but my mouth was stopped. "It is in vain to recal what is past," said the lady, "the business here is not a fond reconciliation; and you are mistaken if you believe me disposed to flatter your inclination. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my own motive for giving my consent to this private interview, in consequence of the pressing instances which have been made, is to tell you, from my own mouth, that henceforth you must study to forget me altogether. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate, had it been joined to yours; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, I cheerfully submit to its decrees."

"How, madam!" answered I, "is it not enough that I have lost you, and see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I am capable of loving? must I also banish you from my thoughts? You would deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only blessing that now remains. Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possible for any man whom you have once charmed, to retrieve his heart? Know yourself better, and cease exhorting me in vain to chase your idea from my remembrance." "Well then," she replied with precipitation, "do you also cease to hope that I will favor your love with any return. I have but

one word to say: the wife of Don Blas shall never be the lover of Don Gaston. Take your measures accordingly; fly from this place; and let us put a speedy end to a conversation with which I upbraid myself, in spite of the purity of my intentions; and which I shall think myself guilty in prolonging."

At these words, which deprived me of the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet: I addressed her in the most pathetic manner; I even employed tears to melt her; but all this served only to excite, perhaps, some sentiments of pity, which she was careful of concealing, and which were sacrificed to her duty. After having to no purpose exhausted all my moving expressions, by prayers and tears; my tenderness changed of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my sword to stab myself before the eyes of the inexorable Helena; who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me, to prevent the consequence. "Hold, Cogollos!" said she. "Is it thus you consult my reputation? In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonor, and make my husband pass for an assassin."

I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavour was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid to save me my own fatal design; and without doubt I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who having been apprised of our interview, instead of

going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry to overhear our conversation, had not come and joined us with all expedition. "Don Gaston," cried he, holding my arms, "recal your scattered reason; and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you."

"Is it your business," said I, interrupting Don Blas, "to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your own hand, to plunge a poniard in my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprise me at night, in your wife's apartment? is there more required to rouse your revenge? stab me at once, and rid yourself of a man who cannot cease adoring Donna Helena, until he ceases to live." "In vain," answered Don Blas, "you endeavour to interest my honor so far as to give you death: you are sufficiently punished by your rashness: and I am so well pleased with the virtuous sentiments of my wife, that I pardon the occasion which she took to show them. Take my advice, Cogollos," added he, "do not despair like a weak lover, but submit to necessity with courage."

The prudent Galician, by such discourse, calmed my rage a little, and waked my virtue: I retired with a design of removing from Helena, and the place that she inhabited; and in two days returned to Madrid, where resolving to employ myself wholly in making my fortune, I appeared at court, and there began to make friends; but

was so unlucky as to attach myself in particular to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman, who being suspected of a design to deliver Portugal from the dominion of Spain, was imprisoned in the castle of Alicant, where he now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew that an intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and me, he caused me to be arrested also, and conducted to this place: that minister believes, that I am capable of being an accomplice in such a scheme; and he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said, "Signior Cavalier, your honor can receive no stain from this disgrace, which will, doubtless, in the end, turn to your advantage. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment, in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason."

CHAP. VII.

SCIPIO FINDS GIL BLAS IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND TELLS HIM A GREAT DEAL OF NEWS.

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who, coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms: "Signior Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison gate, and asked if you was not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. 'Noble captain,' said he, with tears in his eyes, 'don't reject the humble request I make, to know if Signior de Santillane is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a charitable action in allowing me to see him. You are looked upon in Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity; and I hope you will not refuse me the favor of conversing a moment with my dear master, who is not so guilty as unfortunate.' In short," continued Don Andrea, "the young man expressed such a desire of seeing you, that I have promised to give him that satisfaction at night."

I assured Tordesillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure than to admit a young man, who probably had something to communicate, which it imported me very much to know. I waited with impatience for the moment that was

to offer my faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not doubt that it was he; and I was not mistaken. He was introduced into the tower in the evening; and his joy, which mine alone could equal, broke forth in extraordinary transports when he saw me. For my part, I was so much overjoyed at sight of him, that I held out my arms, and he hugged me in his, without ceremony: the distinction between master and secretary were lost in this embrace; so glad were they to see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I interrogated Scipio about the condition in which he left my house. "You have no house," he replied; "and to spare you the trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I will tell you, in two words, what passed at home. Your effects were pillaged, as well by the soldiers as by your own servants, who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid themselves their own wages with what they could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the address to save from their talons two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong box, and secured them by putting them into the custody of Salero, who will re-deliver them as soon as you shall be released from this tower, where I believe you will not be long boarded at his majesty's expense, because you was apprehended without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma."

I asked how he came to know that his excellency had no hand in my misfortune. "O! as for that," said he, "I took care to be well informed:

a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke d'Uzeda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment. 'Calderona,' said he, 'having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Signiora Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night-time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Signior de Santillane, resolved to be revenged upon them as well as upon his mistress. With this view, he went privately to the Duke d'Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The duke, ravished at having in his hand such an opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to use it: he informed the king of what he had heard, and represented to him with great zeal the perils to which the prince had been exposed. This piece of news roused the indignation of his majesty, who immediately ordered Sirena to be shut up in the house of correction, banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.' This," added Scipio, "is what my friend told me; by which you see that your misfortune is the work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or rather of Calderona."

From this information, I imagined that my affairs might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew's exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court: and I flattered myself, that I should not be forgotten by his excellency. What a fine thing hope is! It consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of

my effects, which had been stolen; and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode, where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means that fortune had used to raise me to some great post; for I reasoned with myself in this manner: The partisans for the prime minister are Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and, in particular, Brother Lewis d'Aliaga, who owes to his interest the place he at present possesses at court. With the assistance of these powerful friends, his excellency will demolish all his foes; or perhaps the state will soon alter its appearance: his majesty is very sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more, the prince his son will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me from this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favors. Thus, already elevated with future pleasures, I scarce felt my present misfortune: but I believe the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed, as much as this hope, to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and integrity of Scipio, to be silent on that subject: I offered him the half of the money which he had preserved from the pillage; but this he refused: "I expect," said he, "another mark of acknowledgment." As much surprised at his discourse as at his refusal, I asked what I could do for him?

"Don't let us part," answered he, "allow me to attach my fortune to yours: I have a friendship for you which I never felt for any other master." "And I can assure thee, child," said I, "there is no love lost; the very first moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance or Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the society thou hast proposed; and will begin it by intreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower." "Nothing can give me more pleasure," cried he, "you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favor of him: your company is dearer to me than liberty itself: I will only sometimes go to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favorable to you: so that in me you will enjoy at once a confidant, courier, and spy."

These advantages were too considerable to be rejected: I therefore kept along with me a person so useful, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

CHAP. VIII.

THE MOTIONS AND SUCCESS OF SCIPIO'S FIRST JOURNEY TO MADRID. GIL BLAS FALLS SICK: THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DISTEMPER.

If it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics; it must likewise be owned, that when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary—no more ceremony; they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gaiety in Scipio's conversation; he might have been justly surnamed the good-humored lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profited by his advice. "Friend," said I to him one day, "methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the Duke of Lerma: this could produce no bad effect: what is thy opinion of the matter?" "Yes; but," answered he, "the great are so different from themselves, at different times, that I don't know how your letter will be received: nevertheless, I am of opinion that you should write. In the mean time, although the minister loves you, you must not trust to his friendship, for being remembered by him: these

kind of patrons easily forget those who are out of sight or hearing."

Although this was but too true, I replied, "I judge more favorably of my patron, to whose kindness for me I am no stranger: I am persuaded that he pities my affliction, which incessantly presents itself to his mind: he, probably, waits until the king's wrath shall subside, before he takes me out of prison." "In good time," he resumed, "I wish your opinion of his excellency may be right: implore his assistance then by a very moving letter, which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver it into his own hand."

I immediately called for paper and ink, and composed a morsel of eloquence, which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred even to the homilies of the archbishop of Granada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would be moved with compassion, in reading the melancholy account which I gave him, of the miserable condition in which I was not; and in that confidence dispatched my courier: who no sooner arrived at Madrid, than he went to the minister's house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the duke. "My lord," said Scipio, presenting to his excellency the packet with which he was intrusted, "one of your most faithful servants, stretched upon straw, in a dismal dungeon of the tower of Segovia, most humbly

intreats your grace to read this letter, which a turnkey, out of pity, gave him liberty and means to write." The minister opened and perused the letter: but although he beheld in it a picture capable of melting the most obdurate soul; far from seeming affected at my distress, he raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several persons present, said to the courier, with a furious air; "Friend, tell Santillane, that he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me, after the unworthy action he has committed, and for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must not depend upon my protection; for I abandon him to the resentment of the king."

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding his confusion, endeavoured to intercede for me. "My lord," he resumed, "the poor prisoner will die of grief when he hears the answer of your excellency." The duke made no reply to my mediator, but by a stern look, and turned his back upon him. It was thus the minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had in the amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain: and this ought to be a warning to all little agents, whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negociations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was re-plunged into the dire abyss of

despondency in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage sunk apace, and, notwithstanding all that they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me, by degrees, into a most violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who, by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers of the goddess Libitina.* "Signior Gil Blas," said he, presenting them to me, "here are two Hippocrateses come to see you, they will set you afoot again in a little time." I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should have certainly given them a very bad reception, had I been in the least desirous of living; but, at that time, I felt myself so much tired of life, that I was glad Tordesillas had put me into their hands.

"Signior cavalier," said one of the doctors to me, "in the first place you must repose an entire confidence in our skill." "I have a most perfect dependence on it," answered I; "with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers."

* The goddess who presides over funerals.

"Yes," he replied, "with God's help, you shall: at least we will do our endeavour for that purpose." These gentlemen actually behaved to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to the other world. Don Andrea, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar, to prepare me for my end. The good father having done his duty, had already retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bed-side. "My dear friend," said I to him, with a faint voice, so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken, and the bleedings I had undergone, "I leave to thee one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias, to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it, if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude: the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my hard-heartedness, has, perhaps, occasioned their death. If heaven hath preserved them, in spite of the indifference with which I requited their affection, give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them, from me, to pardon my unnatural behaviour. If they are no more, I charge thee to employ the money in causing prayers to be put up for the repose of their souls and mine." So saying, I stretched out my hand, which he bathed with his tears, without being able to answer one word; so much was the poor young

man afflicted at the prospect of losing me. This proves that the tears of an heir are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit; but I was balked. My doctors having abandoned me, left the field free to nature. I was saved by their desertion. The fever, which, according to their prognostic, was to carry me off, quitted me immediately, as if it intended to give them the lie. I recovered gradually, and, by the greatest good luck in the world, a perfect tranquillity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I then had no need of consolation: I entertained for riches and honor all the contempt which the opinion of approaching death had made me conceive: and now restored, as it were, to myself, blessed my misfortune. I thanked heaven for it, as for a particular favor, and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recal me. I proposed rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design, and told me, that, in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at Madrid. "There is a thing come into my head," added he; "I know a person who can serve you. She is the favorite waiting-woman of the prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt every thing to get

you out of this tower, which is still a prison, notwithstanding the good treatment you receive in it." "Thou art in the right," answered I: "go, my friend, and begin this negociation without loss of time. Would to heaven we were already in our retreat!"

CHAP. IX.

SCIPIO RETURNS TO MADRID, AND PROCURES THE ENLARGEMENT OF GIL BLAS, ON CERTAIN CONDITIONS. WHAT COURSE THEY STEER TOGETHER WHEN THEY LEAVE THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND THE CONVERSATION THAT PASSES BETWEEN THEM.

SCIPIO set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a literati. I loved, in particular, good works of morality, because I found in them, every moment, passages that flattered my aversion for the court, and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me with a gay air, "This time, Signior de Santillane, I bring good news; madame, the nurse, interests herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my intreaty, in consideration of a hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask it of the king his father. I am come hither in a hurry, to apprise you of it, and shall return

immediately to put the finishing stroke to the work." So saying, he left me, and went back to court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me, that the prince had, not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying, "My dear Gil Blas! thank heaven, you are free! the gates of this prison are open to you; but upon two conditions, which, perhaps, will give you a great deal of pain, and which I am obliged to inform you of, though not without regret. His majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to quit the kingdom of Castile in a month. I am very much mortified that you are prohibited from going to court." "And I am overjoyed at it," I replied; "God knows what my opinion of it is. I expected but one favor from the king, and I have received two."

Being assured that I was no longer prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollos, and returned a thousand thanks to Tordesillas, for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Signior Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way, "If we are not rich enough to

buy a magnificent estate, we can, at least, purchase a commodious one." "So we had a little hut," answered I, "I should be satisfied with my condition: for, though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend, for the future, to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Methinks I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingale sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in hunting, and sometimes in fishing. Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is the best. A morsel of bread may satisfy us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it, will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centers wholly in ourselves; and this is so true, that the most delicious of my meals are not those in which the greatest delicacy and abundance reign. Frugality is a source of delight, and wonderfully conducive to health."

"By your leave, Signior Gil Blas," said my secretary, interrupting me, "I am not altogether of your opinion, with regard to the pretended frugality you praise so much. Why should we live like Diogenes? If we indulge our appetites

a little, we shall not find ourselves a bit the worse for it. Take my advice, and since we have, thank God, wherewithal to render our retreat agreeable, let us not make it the habitation of hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall have got possession of our land, we must fortify our house with good wines, and all other provisions suitable to people of taste, who did not quit the commerce of mankind with a view of renouncing the conveniences of life, but rather to enjoy them with more tranquillity. 'That which a man has in his house,' says Hesiod, 'never hurts him: whereas that which he has not, may. It is better,' adds the same author, 'for a man to have all things necessary in his possession, than in his wish only.'"

"How the devil! Mr. Scipio," cried I, "came you to know the Greek poets? Ha! where did you pick up acquaintance with Hesiod?" "In the house of a learned man," he replied: "I served a pedant of Salamanca some time. He was a great commentator, and would toss you up a large volume in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from books in his library, and translated into the Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuensis, I retained in my memory a great number of sentences as remarkable as that which I repeated." "If that be the case," said I, "your memory is well garnished. But, to return to your scheme, in what kingdom of Spain do you think we shall

establish our philosophical residence?" "I vote for Arragon," replied my confidant; "we shall there find charming spots, where we may lead a delicious life." "Well," said I, "be it so. Let us fix in Arragon. I consent to the proposal; and I wish we may there find a place of abode, that will afford all those pleasures with which I feast my imagination.

CHAP. X.

THEIR BEHAVIOUR AT MADRID. GIL BLAS MEETS A CERTAIN PERSON IN THE STREET. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THAT MEETING.

WHEN we arrived at Madrid, we alighted at a small house, where Scipio had lodged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. "I protest to you," said he, "I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain; and therefore gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant." "You were in the right," answered I: "for, besides that this match is more solid, a citizen who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with monsieur his son-in-law."

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the purpose, "Signior Gabriel," added I, "be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles which"—"Your money is ready for you," (said the goldsmith, interrupting me, and conducting us into his closet, showed us the two bags, with notes upon them containing these words: "These bags of doubloons belong to Signior Gil

Blas de Santillane.") "There they are," said he, "just as they were committed to my care."

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me: and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home, where we began to examine our double pistoles. The tale was just, after having deducted about fifty which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided ourselves with clothes and linen. While I was going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron Steinbach, that officer of the German guards in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted that cavalier, who knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. "I am extremely glad," said I to him, "to see your Lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva." "I can give you a certain account of them both," answered he, "for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago, they came to town to thank his majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received in consideration of the services which his ancestors had done the state. He is made governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired

any body to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous: and this shows that our monarch delights in recompensing valor."

Though I knew much better than the Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know any thing of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with him immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or no he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the baroness; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head within his arms, saying, with marks of real joy, "Santillane, have I found you again! I am overjoyed at meeting with you! it was not my fault that ever we parted: for I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. You had no regard to my request; but I am far from being angry with you on that account. I am even beholden to you for the motive of your retreat. But, since that time you ought to have let me heard from you, and spared me the trouble of sending in vain to find you at Granada, where Don Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote me you was."

After this gentle reproach, he continued, "Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here. Be assured

that I share as much as ever in what concerns you." "Signior," answered I, "something less than four months ago, I filled a pretty considerable post at court; having had the honor to be secretary and confidant to the Duke of Lerma." "Is it possible!" cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment; "what! was you in the confidence of the prime minister?" "I gained his favor," said I, "and lost it in the manner you shall hear." I then recounted the whole story, and ended my narration with the resolution I had taken to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Cæsar having listened very attentively, replied, "My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of Fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place, and it is a present which we are in a condition of making, without incommoding ourselves in the least. I dare answer for my father's consent, and know that it will give great pleasure to Seraphina."

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and more charmed with the goodness of his heart than with the value of his favor, "Sig-

nior," said I, "your behaviour enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you: and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgment." My governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pretended service was? I told him; and the information redoubled his surprise. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by my interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity, "Gil Blas," said he, "since I owe my post to you, I don't intend to confine my gratitude to the little farm of Lirias; I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly."

"Halt there, Signior Alphonso," said I, interrupting him, "don't awake my avarice. I have too well experienced that riches serve only to corrupt my morals. I accept, with all my heart, your farm of Lirias, where I will live comfortably with the money which I have already in my possession. But that is sufficient; and far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden to one in retirement, who seeks only to enjoy quiet."

While we conversed in this manner, Don Cæsar coming in, expressed as much joy at seeing me, as his son had done before; and when he

understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary's house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to the house of Baron de Steinbach; and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. "How much," said he, "may this small dominion be worth?" "Five hundred ducats per annum," I replied; "and I can assure thee it is a lovely solitude, which I know very well, having been there several times, in quality of steward to the lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalaviar, in a hamlet of five or six houses, and in the midst of a charming country."

"What pleases me still more in it," cried Scipio, "is, that we shall have fine venison, with wine of Benicarlo, and excellent muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage." "I long as much as thou dost to be there," I replied, "but

I must first make a tour to the Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum, on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I failed in my duty." Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. "Let us lose no time," said he; "I have already secured a chaise, let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo." "Yes, my friend," I replied, "let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my being. Our journey will not be long. We shall soon see ourselves settled in our hamlet, where, when I arrive, I will write over the door of my house, these two Latin verses, in letters of gold;

Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valete.
Sat me lusistis, ludite nunc alios.

BOOK X.

CHAP. I.

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR THE ASTURIAS; PASSES THROUGH VALLADOLID, WHERE HE VISITS HIS OLD MASTER, DOCTOR SANGRADO; AND MEETS, BY ACCIDENT, WITH SIGNIOR MANUEL ORDONNEZ, DIRECTOR OF THE HOSPITAL.

WHILE I was getting ready for my departure from Madrid, with Scipio, on my journey to the Asturias, Pope Paul the Fifth named the Duke of Lerma to the cardinalship. This Pope, being desirous of establishing the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested that minister with the purple, that he might engage him to make King Philip consent to such a laudable design. All those who were well acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, like me, that the church had made a fine acquisition.

Scipio, who would rather have seen me in a brilliant post at court, than buried in solitude, advised me to present myself before the cardinal: "Perhaps," said he, "his eminence, seeing you out of prison by the king's order, will think it unnecessary to appear any longer irritated against you, and take you into his service again." "My Scipio," answered I, "you seem to have forgot

that I obtained my liberty on condition that I should quit the two Castiles immediately. Besides, do you think me already disgusted with my castle of Lirias? I have told you once, and now repeat it, that if the Duke of Lerma would restore me to his good graces, and even offer me the place of Don Rodrigo de Calderona, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken. I will go in quest of my parents at Oviedo, and retire with them to Valencia. As for thee, my friend, if thou repentest of having joined thy fortune to mine, speak; I am ready to give thee one half of my money, and thou mayest stay at Madrid, and push thy fortune as far as it will go."

"How!" replied my secretary, nettled at my words. "can you suspect me of having any repugnance to follow you to your retreat? my zeal and attachment are injured by your suspicion. What! Scipio, that faithful servant, who, to share your affliction, would have willingly passed the remainder of his days with you in the tower of Segovia; shall he feel any regret in accompanying you to an abode that promises him a thousand pleasures? No, no, I have no desire of dissuading you from your resolution. I must own I was a little mischievous, when I advised you to show yourself to the Duke of Lerma: I wanted to sound you, that I might know if some seeds of ambition did not still remain in your breast. Well then, since you are so much detached from pomp and grandeur, let us abandon

the court immediately, to go and enjoy those innocent and delicious pleasures, of which we have formed such charming ideas." We actually set out in a few days, mounted together in a chaise drawn by two good mules, and conducted by a young man, with whom I thought proper to augment my train. We lay the first night at Alcala de Henales, and the second at Segovia; from whence (without staying to visit the generous keeper Tordesillas) we got to Penafiel on the Duero; and next day to Valladolid.* At sight of this last place, I could not help heaving a profound sigh; and my companion, who perceived it, asking the cause, "Child," said I, "I practised physic a long time in this city, and my conscience upbraids me with it this moment! methinks all the sick people whom I killed, come out of their tombs, and seem ready to tear me to pieces." "What a fancy is this!" said my secretary; "truly, Signior de Santillane, you are too good. Why should you repent of having laboured in your vocation? Observe the oldest physicians; do they feel any such remorse: No, sure: they still go on in their old course, with the utmost tranquillity, throwing the blame of all fatal acci-

* Valladolid is one of the most beautiful cities of Old Castile, situated on the small river Escueva, which divides it in two, and over which is a handsome stone bridge of ten or twelve arches. In this place is an university, and no less than seventy convents, one of which is the king's palace, very much embellished by Philip the Fourth.

dents on nature, and claiming honor from every lucky event."

"True," said I, "Doctor Sangrado, whose method I faithfully followed, was a man of that character. Though he saw twenty people die daily under his hands, he was so well convinced of the excellence of bleeding in the arm, and plentiful draughts of warm water, which he called his two specifics in all kinds of distempers, that instead of suspecting his remedies, he believed that his patients died because they had not drank and been blooded enough." "Egad!" cried Scipio, bursting into a loud laugh, "this must be an incomparable person!" "If thou hast any curiosity to see and hear him," said I, "thou mayest satisfy it to-morrow morning, provided Sangrado be still alive, and at Valladolid, which I can scarcely believe, for he was very old when I left him, and that happened a good many years ago."

Our first care, when we arrived at our inn, was to inquire about that doctor, who we learned was not yet dead; but being too old to visit patients, or move about, he had given place to three or four doctors, who had acquired reputation by a new method of practice, which did not succeed a whit better than his. We resolved to stay all next day at Valladolid, as well to rest our horses, as to visit Signior Sangrado, to whose house we repaired about ten o'clock in the morning, and found him sitting in an easy chair, with a book in

his hand. As soon as he perceived us, he got up, and coming towards me, with a firm step, considering his age, which was seventy, asked our business with him? "Mr. Doctor," said I to him, "don't you recollect me? I have the honor to be one of your disciples. Don't you remember a young man called Gil Blas, who formerly lived in your house, and was your deputy?" "What! is it you, Santillane?" answered he, embracing me; "I should not have known you again. I am very glad to see you. What have you been doing since you left me? You have doubtless practised physic all along." "I was, indeed," said I, sufficiently inclined to that profession, which, however, some strong reasons have hindered me from exercising."

"So much the worse," replied Sangrado. "With the principles which you imbibed from me, you would have become an expert physician, provided heaven had given you grace to preserve yourself from the dangerous love of chemistry. Ah! my son," continued he, with an air of sorrow, "what a change has happened in physic within these few years! That art is robbed of all its honor and dignity. That art, which in all times hath regarded the life of man, is now a prey to rashness, presumption, and *imperities*; for their actions speak, and in a little time the very stones will cry aloud against the cabals of these new practitioners. *Lapides clamabunt!* There are, in this city, physicians (or such as call themselves

so) who are yoked to the triumphal car of antimony. *Currus triumphalis antimonii.* Truants from the school of Paracelsus, adorers of *kermes*, accidental curers, who make the whole science of medicine consist in knowing how to prepare chemical drugs. What shall I tell you! every thing is turned topsy-turvy in their method. Bleeding at the foot, for example, hitherto so seldom practised, is now almost the only evacuation in use. Those purgatives, which were formerly gentle and benign, are now changed for emetics and *kermes*. The whole is a mere chaos, where each does what he thinks proper, transgressing those bounds of order and sagacity which our ancient masters had so wisely prescribed."

Whatever inclination I had to laugh at such a comical declamation, I had power to resist it. I did more: I exclaimed against *kermes*, without knowing what it was, and at a venture wished those who invented it at the devil. Scipio observing that I made myself merry with this scene, had a mind to act in it also. "Mr. Doctor," said he to Sangrado, "as I am grand nephew to a physician of the old school, give me leave to revolt with you against chemical medicines. My late grand uncle (rest his soul!) was such a warm partisan of Hippocrates, that he often battled with quacks who spoke disrespectfully of that prince of physic. True blood will always show itself; I would willingly perform the office of executioner to those ignorant innovators, of whom you com-

plain with such eloquence and justice. What disorder must these wretches create in civil society!"

"That disorder," replied the doctor, "is more extensive than you imagine. My having published a book against the robbers of medicine was of no use. On the contrary, the mischief daily increases. The surgeons, mad with the ambition of acting as physicians, think themselves sufficiently qualified, when there is nothing to be done but to give kermes and emetics, to which they add blooding at the foot, according to their own fancy. They even proceed so far as to mix kermes in apozems and cordial potions; and so they are on a par with your celebrated prescribers. This contagion has spread also among the cloisters. There are some monks who act both as apothecaries and surgeons. Those apes of medicines apply themselves to chemistry, and compose pernicious drugs, with which they abridge the lives of their reverend fathers. In fine, there are more than sixty monasteries of men and women in Valladolid; so you may judge what ravage is made in them, by kermes united with emetics and blooding in the foot." "Signior Sangrado," said I, "you have reason to be incensed against these poisoners. I groan in concert with you, and share your alarms for the lives of mankind, which are so manifestly threatened by a method so different from yours. I am very much afraid that chemistry will one day occasion the total ruin of physic; in the same manner as false money proves destructive to kingdoms. Heaven grant that the fatal day be not too near!"

At this part of our conversation, an old maid-servant brought in for the doctor a little light bread on a salver, and a glass with two bottles, one of which was filled with water, and the other with wine. After he had eaten a morsel of the bread, he took a draught of liquor, in which indeed there were two-thirds of water; but that did not save him from the reproach which he gave me the handle to vent against him. "Ah! ah!" said I, "Mr. Doctor, have I caught you in the fact? You drink wine then! You who have always declared against that liquor; you who, during three-fourths of your life, have drank nothing but water. How long have you acted so inconsistently with yourself? You cannot excuse yourself on account of your age; since, in one part of your writings, you define old age a natural decay, that withers and consumes us; and in consequence of that definition, deplore the ignorance of those people who style wine the milk of old men. What therefore can you say in your own justification?"

"You declare war against me very unjustly," replied the old physician. "Had I drank pure wine, you would have had some reason to look upon me as an unfaithful observer of my own method; but you see that my wine is very much diluted." "Another inconsistency, my dear master," said I; "do not you remember that you blamed the canon Sedillo for drinking wine, although it was mixed with a great deal of water? Confess freely, that you are sensible of your error,

and that wine is not a fatal liquor, as you advanced in your works, provided it be drank with moderation."

These words perplexed the doctor, who could not deny that he had forbid the use of wine in his books, but shame and vanity hindered him from owning that my reproach was just, and he did not know what answer to make. To extricate him out of this dilemma, I shifted the discourse; and, in a moment after, took leave of him, exhorting him to keep his ground still against the new practitioners. "Courage, Signior Sangrado," said I to him, "be indefatigable in decrying kermes, and combat against blooding in the foot, without ceasing. If, in spite of your zeal and physical orthodoxy, that empirical race should succeed in ruining true discipline, you will at least enjoy the consolation of having done your utmost to maintain it."

As my secretary and I returned to the inn, conversing together about the diverting and original character of the doctor, a man of about five and fifty or sixty years of age passed us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I viewed him attentively, and easily recollected him to be Signior Manuel Ordonnez, that pious director of the hospital, of whom such honorable mention is made in the first volume of my memoirs. I accosted him with great demonstrations of respect, saying, "Health to the venerable and discreet Signior Manuel Ordonnez, the most proper man

in the world to manage the poor's money." At these words he eyed me narrowly, and answered, that he remembered my features, but could not recollect the place where he had seen me. "I was often at your house," said I, "while you had in your service a friend of mine called Fabricio Nunnez." "Ah! I remember you now," answered the director, with a satirical smile, "by this token, that you were both arch lads, and played together many tricks of youth. Well, what is become of poor Fabricio? every time I think of him I am uneasy about his circumstances."

"My motive," said I, "for taking the liberty of stopping you in the street, was to give you an account of him. Fabricio is at Madrid, employed in composing miscellanies." "What do you call miscellanies?" answered he. "That is," said I, "he writes in prose and verse. He composes comedies and romances: in a word, he is a young fellow of genius, and is very well received in the best families." "But," said the director, how stands he with his baker?" "Not quite so well," answered I, "as with people of fashon: between you and me, I believe he is as poor as Job." "Oh! I don't at all doubt it," cried Ordonnez, "let him make his court to noblemen as much as he pleases, his complaisance, flattery, and cringing, will bring still less into his pockets than his works. Remember, I prophesy, that you will one day see him in the hospital."

"That may very well be," I replied; "poetry has brought many a one to that catastrophe. My

friend Fabricio would have done much better had he remained with your worship. He would by this time have rolled upon gold." "At least, he would have been in very easy circumstances," said Manuel. "I had a regard for him, and would have, by raising him from post to post, procured a solid settlement for him in the hospital, had he not been whimsical enough to set up for a wit. He composed a comedy, which was acted by the players of this city: the piece succeeded; and from that moment his head turned. He believed himself another Lope de Vega; and, preferring the smoke of public applause to the real advantages which my friendship prepared for him, demanded his dismission. I remonstrated in vain, that he was going to quit the substance and run after the shadow. I could not detain this madman, who was actuated with the fury of writing. He did not know his own interest," added he. "The young man who succeeded him in my service is a living proof of this. Having more judgment and less understanding than Fabricio, he applied himself wholly to the execution of his commissions, and studied to please me. Accordingly I have promoted him as he deserved, and he now actually enjoys two employments at the hospital, the least of which is more than sufficient to maintain an honest man encumbered with a large family."

CHAP. II.

GIL BLAS CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY, AND ARRIVES SAFELY AT OVIEDO. THE CONDITION IN WHICH HE FOUND HIS PARENTS. THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, AND THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF.

FROM Valladolid we got in four days to Oviedo, without meeting with any bad accident on the road, notwithstanding the proverb, which says, that robbers smell the money of travellers afar off. We should have been, however, a pretty good booty; and two inhabitants of the cavern would have been sufficient to carry off our doubloons with ease; for I had not learned to grow valiant at court; and Bertrand, my *Moco de Mulas*,* did not seem of a humor to die in defence of his master's purse: Scipio was the only Hector among us.

It being night when we arrived in town, we went to lodge at an inn hard by the house of my uncle, the canon Gil Perez. I was willing to understand the situation of my parents before I should appear as their son; and for this piece of information I could not apply to a more proper person than my landlord or his wife, whom I knew to be people who were very well acquainted with the affairs of their neighbours. In effect, the landlord, after having eyed me with attention,

* Moco de Mulas, a mule-driver.

recollecting my face, cried, "By St. Antonio de Padua! this is the son of honest usher Blas of Santillane." "Yes, truly," said his wife, "it is he indeed! he is very little altered: it is the same little brisk Gil Blas, who had always more spirit in his heart than beef on his bones. I think I see him still coming to this house with his bottle for wine to his uncle's supper."

"Madam," said I, "you have a very happy memory: but pray tell me news of my family; my father and mother are, doubtless, in no very agreeable situation." "That is but too true," replied the landlady: "how bad soever you may think their condition is, you cannot conceive them more distressed than they are. Gil Perez, honest man, has lost the use of one half of his body by the palsy; and, in all appearance, cannot last long: your father, who has lived of late with the canon, has got a defluxion in his breast, or rather is at this moment in the agonies of death; and your mother, though far from being well, is obliged to serve as a nurse to both."

On this report, which made me feel that I was a son, I left Bertrand with my equipage at the inn; and, attended by my secretary, who would not quit me, repaired to my uncle's house. As soon as I appeared before my mother, an emotion, which I caused in her, signified my presence, before her eyes had distinguished my features. "Son," said she, with a melancholy air, after she had embraced me, "come and see your father

breathe his last: you are come time enough to be struck with that cruel spectacle." So saying, she carried me into a chamber where the unfortunate Blas of Santillane, lying on a bed that too well denoted the poverty of an usher, drew near his exit. Though he was environed by the shades of death, his senses had not quite forsaken him. "My dear friend," said my mother to him, "here is your son Gil Blas, who begs your forgiveness for the sorrows he has occasioned, and asks your blessing." At these words, my father opening his eyes, which death had begun to close, fixed them upon me; and observing, in spite of his own lamentable condition, that I was very much affected with the loss of him, seemed moved at my grief, and attempted to speak, but had not strength enough to utter one word. I took hold of one of his hands; and while I bathed it with my tears, unable to pronounce a syllable, he expired, as if he had waited for my arrival before he would breathe his last.

My mother was too well prepared for his death to be immoderately afflicted at it; and I was, perhaps, more grieved than she, although my father had never given me the least mark of his friendship in his life. My being his son was a sufficient cause for me to lament him; besides, I upbraided myself for not having assisted him in his distress: and when I reflected on my hard-heartedness, looked upon myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather as a downright parricide.

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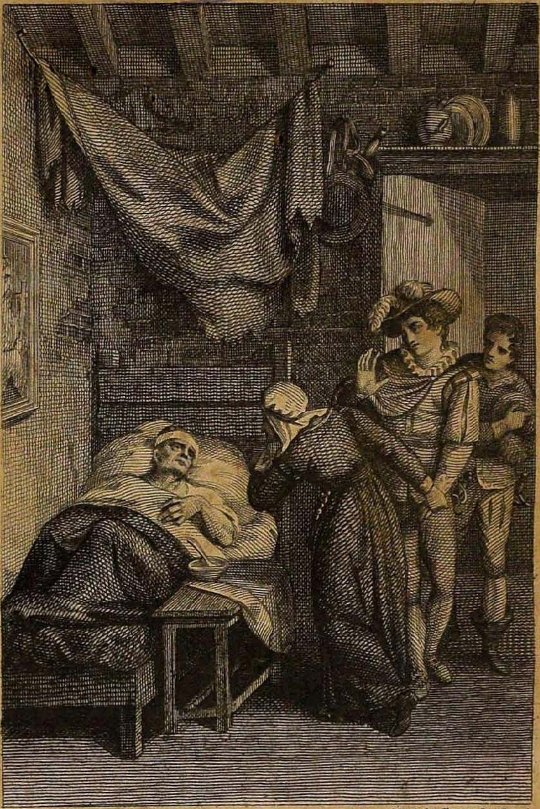

J. Smith, sc. 1 Clements Inn, Strand

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My uncle, whom I afterwards beheld stretched on a truckle bed, and in a miserable condition, made me feel fresh remorse. "Unnatural son," said I to myself, "contemplate, for thy punishment, the misery of thy parents. If thou hadst given them a small share of the superfluity which was in thy possession before thou wast imprisoned, they would have enjoyed conveniences which the revenue of the prebend could not afford; and, perhaps, thou wouldst have prolonged the life of thy father."

The unfortunate Gil Perez was become a child again, having lost both his memory and judgment. In vain did I press him in my arms, with marks of real affection; he seemed insensible of what I did. When my mother told him that I was his nephew Gil Blas, he looked at me with an unmeaning eye, and made no answer. Though blood and gratitude had not obliged me to lament an uncle to whom I owed so much, I could not have beheld him in a condition so worthy of pity, without feeling the emotions of compassion.

All this time Scipio remained in a melancholy silence, partook of my affliction, and, through friendship, mingled his sighs with mine. As I concluded that my mother, after such a long absence, wanted to converse with me, and that she might be uneasy at the presence of a man whom she did not know, I took him aside, and said, "Go, my child, go, and repose thyself at the inn; and leave me here with my mother, who perhaps

will think thee one too many in a conversation that will wholly turn on family affairs." Scipio, rather than put us under any constraint, retired; and I actually discoursed with my mother the best part of the night. We gave one another a faithful account of what had happened to us since my departure from Oviedo: she was minute in the detail of those mortifications she had suffered in the families where she had been duenna, and told me an infinite number of things on that subject which I was glad my secretary did not hear, though he was intrusted with all my secrets. With all the respect that I owe to the memory of a mother, I must own that the good lady was a little prolix in her narrations; and she would have spared me three-fourths of her history, had she suppressed all the trivial circumstances of it: she concluded at length, and I began mine. I passed lightly over all my adventures; but when I came to the visit which I received at Madrid from the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, I enlarged upon that article: "I own," said I to my mother, "I gave that young man a very bad reception; who, to be revenged, has doubtless drawn a very frightful picture of me." "In that he did not fail," answered she; "he told us that he found you so proud of the favor of the prime minister, that you scarce deigned to recollect him: and when he described our distress, heard him with the utmost indifference. As parents," added she, "always endeavour to find

excuses for the behaviour of their children, we could not believe that you had such a bad heart: your arrival at Oviedo justifies our good opinion of you, and your present sorrow confirms your apology."

"You judge too favorably of me," I replied; "there is a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report: when he visited me, I was wholly engrossed by the care of making my fortune; and the ambition that possessed me would not permit me to think of my parents. It must not therefore be wondered at, if, in this disposition, I gave an unwelcome reception to a man, who, accosting me rudely, told me in a brutal manner, that, hearing I was richer than a Jew, he came to advise me to send you some money, of which you stood in great need: he even reproached my indifference for my family in very indecent terms: I was shocked at his freedom; and, losing patience, pushed him by the shoulders out of my closet. I own I was to blame in this rencounter: I ought to have reflected that it was not your fault if the grocer wanted manners; and that his advice was never the worse for its being brutally delivered.

"This was what I represented to myself immediately after I had sent Muscada about his business. My blood spoke in your behalf; I recalled all my duty to my parents; and blushing for shame for having performed it so ill, felt remorse, which, nevertheless, can do me no honor with you, because it was soon stifled by avarice and

ambition; but having been afterwards imprisoned by the king's order in the tower of Segovia, I fell dangerously ill, and that happy distemper hath restored your son to you; yes, it was my disease and imprisonment that made nature resume all her rights, and entirely detached me from court. I now thirst after solitude; and my sole motive for coming to the Asturias, was to intreat you to share with me the sweets of a retired life. If you don't refuse my request, I will conduct you to an estate which I have in the kingdom of Valencia, where we shall live at our ease. You may believe I intended to carry my father thither also; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, let me have the satisfaction of enjoying my mother's company, and of making amends to her for my past neglect, by all imaginable care." "I am very much obliged to your laudable intention," said my mother, "and would go without hesitation, if I saw no objections in the case; but I will not leave my brother, your uncle, in this deplorable condition: and I am so much used to this country, that I cannot now quit it. However, as the thing deserves due consideration, I will think of it at leisure: let us at present take care of your father's funeral." "That," said I, "shall be ordered by the young man whom you saw along with me; he is my secretary, and has such zeal and understanding, that we may depend upon his care.

Scarce had I pronounced these words, when Scipio returned, it being already day; and asking

if we had any occasion for his service in our perplexity, I told him that he came very seasonably to receive an important order which I had to give. When he knew what the business was, "Enough," said he, "I have already contrived the whole ceremony, and you may trust to my discretion." "Beware," said my mother, "of making a pompous burial: it cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the town knew to be a very indigent usher." "Madam," replied Scipio, "had he been still more needy than he was, I would not abate two farthings of the expense: for in this I regard my master only; he has been the Duke of Lerma's favorite; and his father ought to be nobly interred."

I approved of my secretary's design, and even desired him to spare no cost; the remains of vanity, which I still preserved, broke out on this occasion: I flattered myself, that in being at a great expense upon a father who left me no inheritance, I should make the world admire my generous behaviour. My mother, for her part, whatever modesty she affected, was not ill pleased to see her husband buried in splendor. We therefore gave a carte blanche to Scipio, who, without loss of time, took all necessary measures for a superb funeral.

He succeeded but too well, and performed such magnificent obsequies that he brought the whole city and suburbs on my back; all the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the highest to the lowest, being

shocked at my ostentation. "This minister," said one, "is in a great hurry to lay out money on his father's interment; but he was in none to maintain him." "He would have done better," said another, "had he succoured his father while he was alive, than to honor him so much now that he is dead." In short, reproaches were not spared; every one had a fling at me: but they did not stop here; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and me, as we came out of the church, loaded us with revilings, and hooted us as we walked along, and conducted Bertrand to the inn with a shower of stones.

To disperse the mob that was gathered before my uncle's house, there was a necessity for my mother's shewing herself, and declaring, that she was perfectly well satisfied with my conduct. Some ran to the public-house, in order to demolish my chaise; and this they certainly would have done, if the landlord and his wife had not found means to appease their fury, and dissuade them from their design.

All these affronts, which were the effects of the young grocer's report of me through the city, inspired me with such aversion for my townsmen, that I determined speedily to leave Oviedo, where, otherwise, I should perhaps have staid a good while. This I plainly told my mother, who being very much mortified at the reception with which the people had regaled me, did not oppose my departure. What remained now, was to know how

I should dispose of her. "Mother," said I, "since my uncle wants your assistance, I will not press you to go along with me at present; but as, in all appearance, he has not long to live, you must promise to come to my estate immediately after his decease."

"I will make no such promise," answered my mother, "being resolved to pass the rest of my days in the Asturias, in perfect independence." "Will not you always," said I, "be mistress in my house?" "I don't know that," she resumed: "you may fall in love with some young girl, and marry her; then I shall be her mother-in-law; consequently we cannot live together." "You foresee misfortune," said I, "at too great a distance: I have no intention to marry; but, if the fancy should strike me, depend upon it I will oblige my wife to be implicitly submissive to your will." "That is promising too much," resumed my mother, "I should want security for my bondsman; and would not even swear, that, in our disputes, you would not take the part of your wife rather than mine, how far soever she might be in the wrong."

"You talk reasonably, madam," cried my secretary, joining in the conversation, "I am of your opinion, that submissive daughters-in-law are very rare. In the mean time, to accommodate matters between you and my master, since you are absolutely resolved to live in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must grant you an

allowance of one hundred pistoles, which I shall bring hither every year. By these means the mother and son will live very happy at the distance of two hundred leagues from one another." The parties concerned approved of the proposal: I paid the first year's annuity per advance, and quitted Oviedo next morning before break of day, that I might not be treated by the populace like another St. Stephen. Such was the reception I met with in my own country. An excellent lesson for those people of the common rank, who, after having got a fortune abroad, return to the place of their nativity, and affect the gentleman of importance.

CHAP. VIII.

GIL BLAS DEPARTS FOR THE KINGDOM OF VALENCIA, AND AT LENGTH ARRIVES AT LIRIAS. A DISCRIPTION OF HIS HOUSE. HIS RECEPTION; WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE PEOPLE HE FOUND THERE.

We took the road to Leon, then to Valencia; and continuing our journey, by small stages, in ten days arrived at the city of Segorba; from whence, next morning, we repaired to my estate, which is but three leagues distant from it. As we drew near this place, my secretary observed with great attention, all the country seats that presented themselves to his view on the right and left; and when he perceived one of a grand appearance, he always pointed to it with his finger, and said, "I wish that was our retreat." "I don't know, friend," said I to him, "what idea thou hast formed of our habitation; but if you imagine that it is a magnificent house like that on some great nobleman's estate, I tell you, before hand, that you are furiously mistaken. If thou hast not a mind to be the dupe of thy own imagination, represent to thyself the small house which Horace enjoyed in the country of the Sabines, near the Tyber, and which he received in a present from Mæcenas." "Then I must expect to see a cottage!" cried Scipio. "Remember," I replied, "that I have always given you a very modest description of it; and

this moment thou mayst thyself judge, whether or not I am a faithful painter. Cast thy eyes towards the Guadalaviar, and observe on its banks, hard by that small hamlet, the house consisting of four little pavilions; that is my castle." "How the devil!" said my secretary with surprise, "that house is a perfect jewel! Besides the noble air that these pavilions give it, it is extremely well built, and surrounded by a more charming country than even the neighbourhood of Seville, which is called, by way of excellence, the Terrestrial Paradise. Had we chosen our abode, it could not have been more to my taste; a river waters it with its stream, and a thick wood lends its shade, when we are inclined to walk in the middle of the day. What an amiable solitude this is! Ah, my dear master, in all appearance, we shall not quit this place in a hurry." "I am overjoyed," answered I, "that thou art so well satisfied with our asylum, which is more agreeable still than you imagine." Conversing in this manner, we approached the house; the gate of which was thrown open, as soon as Scipio signified that it was Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who came to take possession of his castle. At that name, so respected by those who heard it pronounced, my chaise was admitted into a large court, where I alighted: then leaning on Scipio, and taking state upon myself, I went into a hall, where I was scarce arrived, when seven or eight servants appeared. They said they came to present their homage to their new master; that Don

Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them for my service; one in quality of cook, another as cook's assistant, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as lackeys, with orders to receive no money of me; these two noblemen intending to defray all the expense of my housekeeping. Master Joachim, the cook, who was the principal and spokesman of these domestics, gave me to understand, that he had laid in a large stock of the best wines in Spain; and told me, that as to eating, he hoped a young fellow, like him, who had been cook six years to the archbishop of Valencia, must know how to compose ragouts that would tickle my palate. "I will," added he, "fall presently to work, and produce a sample of my skill. Take a walk, Signior, while dinner is getting ready; visit your castle, and see if it be in an habitable condition."

I leave the reader to judge whether or not I neglected this visit; and Scipio, still more curious than I, dragged me from room to room. We surveyed the whole house from top to bottom; the least corner, as we imagined, did not escape our interested curiosity; and I had every where occasion to admire the bounty of Don Cæsar and his son. Among other things, I was struck with the appearance of two apartments, which were as well furnished as they possibly could be without magnificence. One of them was hung with arras tapestry, and had in it a bed and chairs of velvet, still very handsome, though made when the Moors

possessed the kingdom of Valencia: the furniture of the other was in the same state, consisting of hangings made of old Genoa yellow damask, with a bed and elbow-chairs of the same stuff, adorned with fringes of blue silk. All these effects, which would have been little valued in an inventory, appeared there very considerable. After having thoroughly examined every thing, my secretary and I returned to the hall, where the cloth was laid with two covers. We sat down to table; and in a moment was brought in an *olla podrida*, so delicious, that we pitied the Archbishop of Valencia for having lost the cook that composed it. At every morsel we eat, my new lackeys presented to us large glasses filled to the brims with wine of a most exquisite relish. Scipio, not daring to show before them the interior satisfaction that he felt, expressed himself to me by eloquent looks; and I gave him to understand, by the same language, that I was as well satisfied as he. A dish of roast meat, composed of two fat quails, which flanked a leveret of an admirable *fumet*, made us quit the olio, and finish our repast. When we had eaten like two gormandizers, and drank in proportion, we got up from table, and walked into the garden, to enjoy a voluptuous *siesta** in some cool agreeable place.

If my secretary seemed hitherto satisfied with what he had seen, he was still more so when he

* Siesta literally signifies the heat of the day, from noon forwards; but it is here used to express the afternoon's nap, enjoyed every day by the inhabitants of hot climates.

beheld the garden, which he thought comparable even to that of the Escurial. It is true, Don Cæsar, who came frequently to Lirias, took pleasure in having it cultivated and embellished: the walks were gravelled, and bordered with orange-trees, a great bason of white marble, in the middle of which a brazen lion vomited out great gushes of water, the beauty of the flowers, the variety of fruits, all these objects ravished Scipio; but he was in a particular manner enchanted with a long walk that led by a gentle descent all the way to a farmer's house, and was shaded by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. Here we stopped to make the eulogium of a place so proper for an asylum against the heat of the day; and sitting down at the root of a young elm, sleep easily surprised two merry boys who had just made such a good dinner.

Two hours after, we started up, awakened by the noise of several shot, which seemed so near, that we were frightened. We got up in a hurry, and repaired to the farmer's house, where we found eight or ten peasants, all inhabitants of the hamlet, who had scoured and fired their fusils, to celebrate my arrival, of which they had got notice. The greatest part of them knew me, having seen me more than once at the castle, in the exercise of my stewardship. They no sooner perceived me, than they cried all together, "Long life to our new master, who is welcome to Lirias!" Then they loaded their pieces, and regaled me with a general

discharge. I received them as courteously as I could; preserving my gravity, however, thinking it improper to be too familiar with them. I assured them of my protection, left twenty pistoles among them; and this, I believe, they did not look upon as the most disagreeable part of my behaviour. I afterwards left them at liberty to spend more powder, and retired with my secretary into the wood, were we strolled about till night, without being tired with beholding the groves; so charming is the first view of a new possession.

The cook, his assistant, and scullion, were not idle in the mean time; they were busy in preparing a repast, even superior to that which we had eaten; and we were actually astonished, when, returning into the small hall where we had dined, we saw them place upon the table a dish of roasted partridges, with a *civè** of rabbit, on one side, and on the other a capon in ragout. The next course of dainties consisted of pigs ears, pickled chicks, and cream chocolate. We drank plentifully of Lucena, and several sorts of excellent wine; and when we found we could drink no more, without exposing our healths, we thought of going to bed. Then my lackeys, taking lights, conducted me to the best apartment, where they were very officious in undressing me: but when they gave me my gown and night-cap, I dismissed them; saying,

* A *civè* is sauce made of the entrials of a hare or rabbit.

with a magisterial air, "Leave me, gentlemen; I have no farther occasion for you to-night."

I sent them all away; and keeping Scipio for a little conversation, asked what he thought of the treatment I received by order of the noblemen of Leyva. "In faith," answered he, "I think you can't be treated better; I only wish that this may last." "I entertain no such wish," I replied: "it ill becomes me, to let my benefactors be at such an expense on my account; this were to abuse their generosity; besides I can't put up with servants who are paid by another; I should not believe myself in my own house. Neither am I come hither to live in a bustle; we have no occasion for such a great number of domestics; we want no more than Bertrand, a cook, a scullion, and lackey." Although my secretary would not have been sorry to live always at the expense of the governor of Valencia, he did not oppose my delicacy in this affair; but, conforming himself to my sentiments, approved of the reform I intended to make. This being determined, he left me, and retired into his own apartment.

CHAP. IX.

HE DEPARTS FOR VALENCIA, TO VISIT THE NOBLEMEN OF LEYVA. HIS CONVERSATION WITH THEM, AND THE KIND RECEPTION HE MET WITH FROM SERAPHINA.

I UNDRESSED and went to bed, where, feeling no inclination to sleep, I abandoned myself to reflection. I represented to myself the friendship with which the noblemen of Leyva repaid my attachment to them; and penetrated with those new marks of their affection, resolved to go, the very next day, and satisfy the longing impatience I had of seeing and thanking them for their favors. I likewise enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasure of seeing Seraphina again; but that pleasure was not pure: I could not without uneasiness, consider, that I must, at the same time, support the looks of dame Lorença Sephora, who, perhaps, remembering the adventure of a box on the ear, would not be overjoyed at sight of me. Fatigued with all these different ideas, I at length fell asleep, and did not wake till after sun-rise.

I was soon a-foot; and, wholly engrossed by my intended journey, dressed myself in a hurry. Just as I had done adjusting myself, my secretary coming into my chamber, "Scipio," said I, "you see me ready to set out for Valencia; I cannot make too much haste in going to salute the noble-

men to whom I owe my small fortune; every moment that I delay to acquit myself of this duty, seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for thee, my friend, I dispense with thy attendance; stay here in my absence, and I will come back to thee in eight days." "Go, Sir," he replied, "pay your respects to Don Alphonso and his father, who seem so sensible of your zeal, and grateful for the services you have done them: persons of quality of that character are so rare, that they cannot be too much esteemed." I ordered Bertrand to get ready for our departure; and while he yoked the mules I drank my chocolate: then I got into my chaise, after having laid injunctions upon my people to regard my secretary as my other self, and to follow his orders as if they were my own.

I arrived at Valencia in less than four hours; and going straight to the governor's stables, there alighted, left my equipage, and was conducted to the apartment of that nobleman, who was then with his father Don Cæsar. I opened the door, and entering without ceremony, accosted them in these words: "It does not become valets to send in their names to their masters: here is one of your old servants come to pay his respects." So saying, I would have kneeled before them; but they hindered me from so doing, and embraced me, one after another, with all the expressions of genuine affection. "Well, my dear Santillane," said Don Alphonso, "have you been at Lirias to take possession of your estate?" "Yes, Signior,"

I replied, "and I hope you will give me leave to restore it." "For what reason?" said he. "Is there any thing disagreeable about it, that gives you disgust?" "Not in itself," I resumed; "on the contrary, I am enchanted with it. All that displeases me in it is, to see cooks of an archbishop, with three times more servants than I want, which only serve to put you to an expense equally useless and considerable."

"If," said Don Cæsar, "you had accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered at Madrid, we should have been contented with giving you the house furnished as it is; but you know you refused the pension; and we thought we could do no less than make you some other recompense." "This is too much," I replied: "your generosity ought to have been confined to the present of the estate, which is enough to crown my wishes. But, exclusive of your cost in maintaining so many people, at a great expense, I declare that these people incommode and plague me. In a word, my lords, take back your estate, or allow me to enjoy it according to my own desire." I pronounced these last words with such a determined air, that the father and son, who did not at all intend to lay me under any constraint, promised, at length, that I should live as I pleased in my own house.

I thanked them for having granted me that liberty, without which I could not be happy; when Don Alphonso interrupted me, saying,

"My dear Gil Blas, I will introduce you to a lady, who will be overjoyed to see you." With these words, he took me by the hand, and led me into the apartment of Seraphina, who screamed with joy when she saw me. "Madam," said the governor, "I believe the arrival of our friend Santillane at Valencia is as agreeable to you as to me." "That is what he ought to be convinced of," answered she: "time has not made me lose the remembrance of the service he did me: and to the gratitude I myself owe him, I add that which I ought to have on your account." I told the lady governess, that I was but too well requited for the danger I had shared with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her sake. After many mutual compliments, Don Alphonso brought me back from Seraphina's apartment; and we rejoined Don Cæsar, whom we found in a hall with several persons of quality, who came thither to dinner.

All these gentlemen saluted me with great politeness; and were the more civil to me, because Don Cæsar had told them that I was once one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. Perhaps, likewise, the greatest part of them knew it was by my credit that Don Alphonso had obtained the government of Valencia; for every thing is known. Be that as it will, when we were at table, the new cardinal was the whole subject of the discourse. Some gave, or affected to give, him great commendation; while others seasoned their praise with some severe sneers.

From hence I concluded that they wanted I should enlarge upon his eminence, and make them merry at his expense. I had some inclination to disclose my sentiments of him; but I restrained my tongue: and this silence made me pass, in the opinion of the company, for a man of great discretion.

After dinner, the guests retired to take their siestas at their own homes: Don Cæsar and his son, seized with the same desire, shut themselves up in their apartments: and I, impatient to see a city, the beauty of which I had heard so much extolled, went out of the governor's palace, with a design to stroll through the streets. At the gate I met a man, who accosted me in these words: "Signior de Santillane, give me leave to salute you." When I asked who he was, "I am now, said he, "Don Cæsar's valet de chambre; but was one of his lackeys, while you was his steward: I made my court to you every morning, because you was very kind to me; and I informed you of every thing that happened in the house. Don't you remember that I one day gave you notice, that the surgeon of the village of Leyva was privately admitted into the chamber of dame Lorença Sephora?" "I have not forgot it," I replied: "but, a-propos, what is become of that duenna?" "Alas!" said he, "after your departure the poor creature pined away, and died, more regretted by Seraphina than by Don Alphonso, who seemed very little afflicted at her death."

Don Cæsar's valet de chambre having thus informed me of Sephora's melancholy end, made an apology for having stopped me; and I continued my walk, sighing at the remembrance of that unfortunate duenna, and lamenting her fate, which I imputed to myself, without considering that it was more owing to her own cancer than to my cruelty.

I observed, with pleasure, all that was worth seeing in this city: the marble palace of the archbishop agreeably entertained my view, as well as the fine porticos of the exchange; but a large house, which I discerned at a distance, and which I saw a great number of people enter, attracted my attention. I approached it, in order to know the reason of such a great concourse of men and women; and was soon satisfied, when I read these words, written in golden letters, on a stone of black marble placed over the gate, *La posada da los represantes:** and the players advertised in their bill, that they would that day, for the first time, act a new tragedy composed by Don Gabriel Triaquero.

* The play-house.

CHAP. V.

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE PLAY, WHERE HE SEES A NEW TRAGEDY ACTED. THE SUCCESS OF THAT PERFORMANCE, WITH THE PUBLIC TASTE OF VALENCIA.

I STOPPED some minutes at the door, to view the people who went in, and observed that they consisted of all ranks. I saw cavaliers of a genteel mien, and richly dressed, and some figures as ordinary as the clothes they wore. I perceived ladies of quality alight from their coaches, and go to the boxes, which they had ordered to be bespoke; and female adventurers go in with a view of alluring cullies. This concourse of all sorts of spectators made me desirous of increasing the number. Just as I was going to take a ticket, the governor and his lady arriving, discerned me in the crowd; and ordering me to be called, carried me into their box, where I placed myself behind them, so as to be able to speak to both with ease. I found the house full of people from top to bottom, the pit very much thronged, and the stage loaded with knights of the three military orders. "Here is," said I to Don Alphonso, "a very numerous assembly." "You must not be surprised at that," answered he: "the tragedy to be represented is the composition of Don Gabriel Triaquero, sirnamed the *modish poet*. As soon as the play-bills

advertised a new thing written by that author, the whole city of Valencia was in a flutter; the men as well as the women talk of nothing but this piece: all the boxes are bespoke: and it being the first day of its representation, people are squeezed to death, endeavouring to enter; although every place is double filled, except the pit, which they dare not disoblige." "Such madness!" said I to the governor; "that eager curiosity of the public, that furious impatience to see every new production of Gabriel, gives me a high idea of the poet's genius."

In this part of our conversation the actors appeared; and we left off speaking immediately in order to listen with attention. The applauses began with the prologue; every verse was attended with a *brouhaha!** and at the end of each act there was such a clapping of hands, that one would have thought the house was falling. After the performance they showed me the author, who went from box to box, modestly presenting his head for the laurels with which the gentlemen and ladies prepared to crown him.

We returned to the governor's palace, where three or four knights arrived in a little time: thither also came two old authors, esteemed in their way, with a gentleman in Madrid, of understanding and taste. As they had all been at the play, the whole couversation at supper turned

* Brouhaha! a note of applause.

upon the new piece. "Gentlemen," said a knight of St. Jago, "what is your opinion of this tragedy? Is it not what you call a finished work? Sublime thoughts, tender sentiments, manly versification, deficient in nothing; in a word, it is a poem adapted to people of taste." "I believe nobody can be of a contrary opinion," said the knight of Alcantara; "the piece is full of strokes that Apollo seems to have dictated, and of situations conceived with infinite art. I appeal to this gentleman," added he, addressing himself to the Castilian; "he seems to be a connoisseur; and I'll wager he is of my sentiment." "Don't wager, chevalier," answered the gentleman, with a sarcastic smile; "we do not decide so hastily at Madrid: far from judging a piece at its first representation, we distrust its beauties while they are in the mouths of the actors: and how well soever we may be affected to the author, suspend our judgments until we have read it; and, truly, it does not always give us the same pleasure upon paper that we received from it on the stage. We scrupulously examine a poem before we esteem it, without being dazzled by the author's reputation, how great soever it may be. When Lope de Vega himself, and Calderona,* produced new pieces, they found in their admirers severe judges, who would not raise them to the highest point of

* Don Pedro Calderona da la Barea, knight of the order of St. Jago, and canon of Toledo; famous for the excellent comedies he has written.

glory, until they judged them worthy of that elevation."

"Zooks!" cried the knight of St. Jago, "we are not so fearful as you: we don't wait until a piece is printed, but in the first representation fix its value: there is not even occasion for our listening to it with great attention; if we know it to be a production of Don Gabriel, that is enough to convince us that it is without blemish. The works of that poet ought to serve as an epocha for the birth of taste: your Lopes and Calderonas were but apprentices in comparison of this great master of the stage." The gentleman, who looked upon Lope and Calderona as the Spanish Sophocles and Euripides, was shocked at this rash assertion. "Such dramatic sacrilege!" cried he. "Since you oblige me, gentlemen, to judge, like you, from a first representation, I must tell you, that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel: it is stuffed with strokes more shining than solid; three parts in four of the verse are bad, or mis-rhimed; the characters ill conceived, and ill supported; and the sentiments are often very obscure."

The two authors who were at table, and who, through a reserve as commendable as rare, had said nothing for fear of being suspected of jealousy, could not help applauding the gentleman's sentiments with their eyes; which made me guess, that their silence was not so much owing to the perfection of the work, as to other prudential

reasons. As for the knights, they began again to praise Don Gabriel, whom they even placed among the gods. This extravagant apotheosis, and blind idolatry, made the Castilian lose all patience: he lifted up his hands to heaven, and all of a sudden exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, "O divine Lope de Vega! rare and sublime genius, who has left an immense space between thee and all the Gabriels who attempt to reach thy excellence; and you, pithy Calderona! whose elegant softness, purged of epic stiffness, is inimitable; do not fear that your altars will be demolished by this new pupil of the Muses, who will be very lucky, if posterity, which you will delight, as you delight the present age, shall hear his name mentioned."

This pleasant apostrophe, which nobody expected, raised the laugh of the whole company, which got up from table, and parted. I was conducted, by Don Alphonso's order, into an apartment prepared for me; there I found a good bed, in which my worship went to sleep, deploring (like the Castilian gentleman) the injustice which ignorant people did to Lope and Calderona.

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J. Smith, sc. 2 Clements Inn, Strand

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CHAP. VI.

GIL BLAS, WALKING THROUGH THE STREETS OF VALENCIA, MEETS A FRIAR WHOM HE THINKS HE KNOWS. AN ACCOUNT OF THAT FRIAR.

As I had not seen the whole city in my first excursion, I went out next day with an intention to take another walk; and perceived in the street a Carthusian friar, who, doubtless, was going to perform the affairs of his community. He walked with downcast eyes, and so devout an air, that he attracted the notice of every body. As he passed close by me, I looked at him with attention, and thought I saw in him the very person of Don Raphael, the adventurer who maintains such an honorable place in the two first volumes of my memoirs.

I was so much astonished, so struck with this meeting, that, instead of accosting the monk, I stood immoveable some minutes; during which he was gone a good way from me. "Just heaven!" said I, "were ever two faces more alike? What must I think of this affair? Can it be Raphael indeed; or can I doubt that it is he?" I was too curious to know the truth, to remain long where I was. I asked the way to the monastery of the Carthusians, whither I instantly repaired, in hopes of seeing my man again, when he should return;

and firmly resolved to stop and speak with him. I had no occasion to wait for this: when I came to the gate of the convent, another face of my acquaintance turned my doubts into certainty; I recollected in the porter my old valet Ambrose de Lamela.

We were equally surprised to find one another in that place. "Don't I dream?" said I, saluting him; "is it actually one of my friends whom I behold?" He could not recal me at first, or feigned himself ignorant of my features; but considering that this feint was useless, he affected the air of a person who remembers a thing all of a sudden: "Ah! Signior Gil Blas!" cried he, "forgive my want of memory. Since I have lived in this holy place, and applied myself to fulfil the duties prescribed by our rules, I lose insensibly the remembrance of what I have seen in the world."

"I am sincerely rejoiced," said I, "to see you, after an absence of ten years, in such a reverend dress." "And I," he replied, "am ashamed to appear in it before a person who has been witness of the guilty life I led. This dress incessantly upbraids me. Alas!" added he, sighing profoundly, "to be worthy of wearing it, I ought to have lived always in innocence." "By this discourse, with which I am charmed," I resumed, "my dear brother, one may see that you have been touched by the finger of the Lord. I repeat the assurance of my joy at the occasion; and long

earnestly to hear in what miraculous manner you and Don Raphael have entered into the right way; for I am persuaded that it is he whom I just now met in the Carthusian habit. I am sorry that I did not stop him in the street, and speak to him; and I wait here for his return, in order to repair my neglect."

"You are not mistaken," said Lamela to me; "it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw: and as to the detail you desire, here it is. After we parted from you, near Segorba, the son of Lucinda and I took the road to Valencia, with a design of playing some new trick of our profession in that city. One day, by accident, we went into the church of the Carthusians, while the monks were singing psalms in the choir. We considered them attentively, and experienced, that even the wicked cannot help honoring virtue. We admired the fervor with which they prayed to God, their immortal air, their minds detached from the pleasures of the age, as well as the serenity that reigned in their countenances, and so well expressed the repose of their consciences.

"While we made these observations, we fell into a reverie, that became very salutary unto us. We compared our morals with those of the good monks, and the difference which we found filled us with sorrow and disquiet. 'Lamela,' said Don Raphael to me when we came out of the church, 'how art thou affected with what we have seen? for my part, I cannot conceal from thee the anxiety

of my mind. I am agitated by emotions hitherto unknown to me, and, for the first time of my life, my conscience upbraids me with my iniquity.' 'I am in the self-same disposition,' answered I: 'the evil actions which I have committed, at this instant rise up against me; and my heart, which was before hardened against repentance, is now torn with remorse.' 'Ah! dear Ambrose!' resumed my comrade, 'we are two strayed sheep, whom the heavenly Father, through pity, intends to bring back into the fold. It is he, my child, it is he who calls to us; let us not be deaf to his voice. Let us renounce cheating, quit the libertinism in which we live, and begin from this very day to labour seriously in the great work of our salvation. We must spend the rest of our days in this convent, and consecrate them to piety and penitence.'

"I applauded Raphael's sentiments," continued brother Ambrose, "and we formed the generous resolution of becoming Carthusians. To put this in execution, we addressed ourselves to the father prior, who no sooner understood our design, than, in order to prove our vocation, he accommodated us with cells, and we were treated like monks during a whole year. We followed the rules with such exactness and constancy, that we were received among the novices. We were so well satisfied with our situation, and so full of ardor, that we courageously underwent the toils of the noviciate; we then professed: after which, Don

Raphael appearing endued with a genius for business, was chosen assistant to an old father, who was at that time solicitor. The son of Lucinda would have rather spent his whole time in prayer, but he was obliged to sacrifice his inclination to the good of the convent. He acquired such a perfect knowledge of the interests of the house, that he was deemed capable of filling the place of the old solicitor, who died three years after. Don Raphael actually exercises that employment at present, and acquits himself in it to the great satisfaction of all our fathers, who praise his conduct very much, in the administration of his temporalities. What is very surprising is, that, in spite of the care of collecting our revenues, with which he is invested, he seems engrossed by eternity alone: and when his business leaves him a moment to himself, he employs it in the most profound meditation. In a word, he is one of the holiest monks in our monastery."

In this place I interrupted Lamela with a transport of joy, that I expressed at the sight of Raphael, who arrived. "There," cried I, "there is the holy solicitor for whom I waited so impatiently." At the same time I ran and embraced him. He received my salutation with a good grace; and without discovering the least surprise at meeting, said to me, with a voice full of sweetness, "God be praised, Signior de Santillane, God be praised for the pleasure I have in seeing you." "Truly," I replied, "my dear Raphael, I share as

much as possible in your happiness. Brother Ambrose has recounted to me the history of your conversion, and I was charmed with the narration. What advantage have you both, my friends, in being able to flatter yourselves, that you are of the small number of the elect, who will one day enjoy eternal felicity!"

"Two wretches such as we are," resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air of great humility, "ought not to conceive such hopes; but the repentance of sinners makes them find favor with the Father of mercy. And you, Signior Gil Blas," added he, "don't you also think of deserving pardon for the crimes you have committed? What business brings you to Valencia? Don't you unhappily fill some dangerous employment in this place?" "No, thank God!" I replied; "since I have quitted the court, I have led the life of an honest man. Sometimes at an estate, which I have some leagues from hence, I enjoy the pleasures of the country; and sometimes I come to make merry with the governor of Valencia, who is my friend, and one whom you both know perfectly well."

Then I recounted the history of Don Alphonso de Leyva, to which they listened with attention; and when I told them I had carried from that nobleman to Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had stolen from him, Lamela interrupted me, and addressing himself to Raphael, "Father Hilary," said he, "at that rate the mer-

chant has no cause to complain of a robbery for which he has received restitution with usury, and we ought to have quiet consciences on that article." "Really," said the solicitor, "brother Ambrose and I, before we entered this convent, sent privately fifteen hundred ducats to Samuel Simon, by a worthy clergyman who took the trouble of going to Xelva, in order to make that restitution: so much the worse for Samuel, if he was capable of touching that sum, after having been reimbursed of the whole by Signior de Santillane." "But," said I to them, "are you sure that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully remitted to him?" "Questionless," cried Don Raphael; "I will answer for the clergyman's integrity, as much as for my own." "And I will join in the security," said Lamela; "he is a holy priest used to these sort of commissions, and has had, for things deposited in his hands, two or three law-suits, which he gained with costs."

Our conversation lasted some time longer: when we parted, they exhorted me to have always the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and I recommended myself to their devout prayers. Going straight to Don Alphonso, "You can't guess," said I to him with whom I have had a long conversation. I have just parted with two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance; one called father Hilary, and the other brother Ambrose." "You are mistaken," answered Don Alphonso, "I know not one Carthusian." "Pardon me," I replied,

"you saw at Xelva brother Ambrose commissary, and father Hilary secretary to the Inquisition." "Good heaven!" cried the governor, with surprise, "is it possible that Raphael and Lamela are become Carthusians?" "Yes, indeed," said I; "they have been professed monks some years. The first is solicitor, and the other porter of the convent."

Don Cæsar's son mused some minutes; then shaking his head, "Mr. Commissary of the Inquisition and his secretary," said he, "are, in my opinion, bent upon playing some new farce here." "You are prejudiced against them," answered I. "For my own part, having conversed with them, I judge more favorably of their intention. It is true, we cannot dive into the heart; but, in all appearance, they are two converted sinners." "That may be," resumed Don Alphonso; "there have been many libertines, who, after having scandalized the world by their irregularities, shut themselves up in cloisters to perform a rigorous penance; and I wish our two monks may be of that sort." "Why should they not?" said I; "they have voluntarily embraced a monastic life, and have already lived a long time like good friars." "You may say what you please," replied the governor, "I don't like that the convent's cash should be in the hands of this said father Hilary, whose integrity I cannot help distrusting. When I remember that fine detail he gave us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I would willingly

believe with you, that he has taken the habit from a very pious motive, but the sight of the cash may awake his cupidity. A reformed drunkard should never be left in a cellar."

The suspicion of Don Alphonso was fully justified in a few days. Father Solicitor and brother Porter disappeared with the cash. This piece of news, which was immediately spread all over the city, afforded great mirth to the wits, who always rejoiced at the misfortunes which happen to endowed monks. As for the governor and me, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our acquaintance with the two apostles.

CHAP. VII.

GIL BLAS RETURNS TO HIS CASTLE OF LIRIAS, HEARS AN AGREEABLE PIECE OF NEWS FROM SCIPIO, AND MAKES A REFORM IN HIS HOUSEKEEPING.

I SPENT eight days at Valencia in high taste, living among counts and marquises. Shows, balls, concerts, entertainments, conversations with the ladies, and other amusements, I enjoyed by the favor of the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so successfully, that when I set out for Lirias they were sorry to part with me. They even obliged me to promise that I would divide my time between them and my solitude; and it was agreed that I should live at Valencia in the winter, and spend the summer at my own house. This convention being made, my benefactors gave me liberty to go and enjoy their favors.

Scipio, who impatiently expected my return, was overjoyed at seeing me; and I redoubled his pleasure by a faithful report of my journey. "Well, my friend," said I to him afterwards, "how didst thou spend the day in my absence? didst thou divert thyself agreeably?" "As well," answered he, "as a servant could, to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked all over our small territories. Sometimes seated on the brink of that fountain which is in our

wood, I took pleasure in contemplating the beauty of its waters, which are as pure as those of the sacred fountain that makes the vast forest of Albuena echo with its noise; and sometimes, stretched at the root of a tree, heard the linnets and the nightingales tune their song. In short, I have hunted, I have fished; and what gave me more satisfaction than all other amusements, I have read several books, as useful as entertaining."

I interrupted my secretary with precipitation, to ask where he found these books. "I found them," said he, "in a handsome library, which Mr. Joachim shewed me in this castle." "Ha! in what part," said I, "can this pretended library be? Did we not visit the whole house on the first day of our arrival?" "So you imagined," answered he: "but you must know we surveyed three pavilions only, and forgot the fourth, where Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, usually employed a part of his time in reading. There are in this library exceeding good books left for you, as an assured entertainment, when our gardens, stript of their flowers, and our woods of their leaves, shall have nothing left to amuse us. The noblemen of Leyva have not done things by halves, but provided food for the mind as well as for the body."

Truly rejoiced at this piece of news, I followed him into the fourth pavilion, which presented a very agreeable scene to my view. I beheld a chamber, which from that hour I destined to be my

apartment, as it had been Don Cæsar's. The bed of that nobleman was still there, together with all the rest of the furniture; that is, a tapestry with figures representing the rape of the Sabine women. From this room I went into a closet, surrounded with low presses filled with books, over which appeared the portraits of all our kings. There was also hard by a window, from whence we had a view of a most delightful country, and an ebony bureau standing before a large sofa covered with black maroquin. But I bestowed my chief attention upon the library, which was composed of philosophy, poetry, history, and a great number of romances on the subject of knight-errantry. I concluded that Don Cæsar loved this last kind of writing, since he had made such plentiful provision of it. I must confess, to my shame, that I was no less pleased with these productions, notwithstanding all the extravagances with which they are interwoven; whether it was owing to my being at that time no very considerate reader, or that Spaniards in general are too much captivated by the marvellous, I will say, nevertheless, that I took more pleasure in sprightly books than morality; and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus became my favorite authors.

"Friend," said I to Scipio, when I had surveyed my library, "here is amusement indeed; but our present business is to retrench our housekeeping." "I will spare you that task," answered he. "During your absence I have studied your

people, and now may boast of knowing them perfectly well. Let us begin with Mr. Joachim, who, I believe, is a complete rogue; and I don't doubt that he was turned out of the archbishop's service for having committed arithmetical blunders in his accounts. Nevertheless, we must keep him for two reasons; the first is, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him: I will be a spy upon his actions, and he must be as cunning as the devil if he is able to deceive me. I have already told him that you intend to dismiss three-fourths of your servants; a piece of news that gave him some pain: and he assured me, that feeling an inclination to serve you, he would, rather than leave the house, be contented with the half of his present wages; a circumstance which makes me suspect that there is some girl in the village from whom he would not willingly remove. As for the cook's assistant," added he, " he is a drunkard, and the porter an insolent fellow, for whom we have not the least occasion, any more than for the fowler; I can easily fill up the place of this last, as I will shew you to-morrow, since we have plenty of fusils, powder and shot. With regard to the lackeys, there is one of them from Arragon, seemingly a good lad, him we well keep; the rest are such rogues, that I would not advise you to retain them, even if you wanted an hundred valets."

Having maturely deliberated on this affair, we resolved to keep the cook, scullion, Arragonian

footman, and rid ourselves honorably of the rest. This was executed that very day, by means of some pistoles which Scipio took from our strong box, and divided among them by my order. When we had made this reformation, we established a certain order in the house, regulated the office of each domestic, and began to live at our own expense. I would have been contented with a frugal ordinary; but my secretary, who loved ragouts and dainties, was not the man to leave Mr. Joachim's skill unemployed. He kept him so well at work, that our dinners and suppers might have served a company of Bernardine monks.

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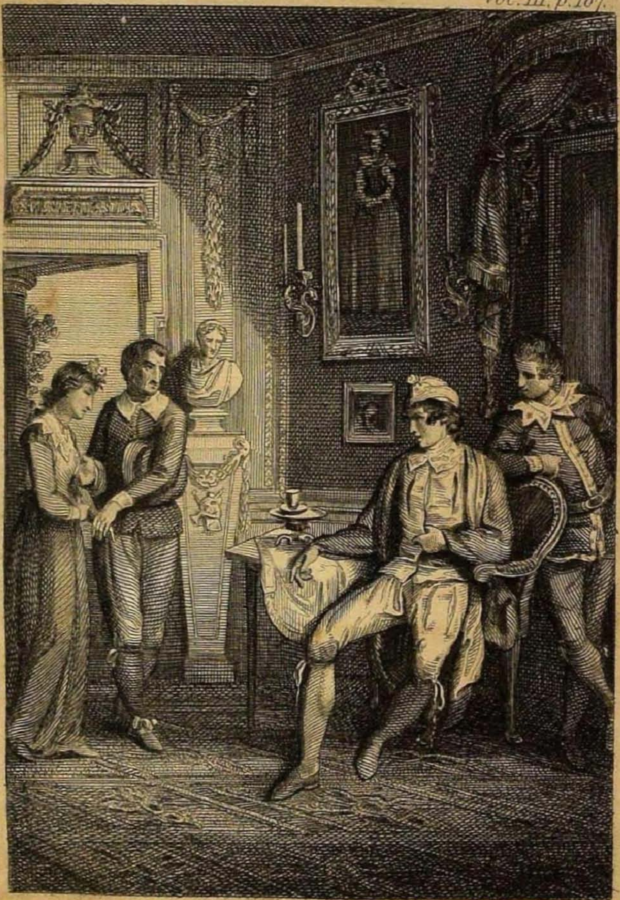

J. Smith. sc. 1 Clements Inn. Strand

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CHAP. VIII.

THE AMOURS OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR ANTONIA.

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basil the labourer, my farmer, came in the morning to ask leave to present Antonia his daughter, "who," he said, "wanted to have the honor of saluting her new master." I told him, that it would give me great pleasure; upon which he went out, and returned soon after with the fair Antonia: I think I may give that epithet to a maid of sixteen or eighteen years, who with the most regular features, possessed the fairest complexion and finest eyes in the world. Though she was clad in a stuff gown, her rich air, majestic port and graces, that do not always accompany youth, dignified the simplicity of her dress. She wore no cap on her head, her hair being tied up behind with a knot of flowers, in the manner of the Lacedæmonian women. When she entered my chamber, I was as much struck with her beauty as the knights of Charlemagne's court with the charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with ease, and saying kind things to her; instead of congratulating the father on his happiness in having such a charming daughter, I stood confounded, astonished, and mute. Scipio, who perceived my disorder, spoke in my room, and was at the expense of those

praises which I owed to that lovely creature. As for her part, not at all dazzled by my figure, in my morning gown and cap, she saluted me without any concern, and made me a compliment, which, though common, enchanted my affection. In the mean time, while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter, were employed in mutual civilities, I recollected myself; and to make amends for the stupid silence I had hitherto kept, passed from one extreme to another, launched forth into gallant discourse, and spoke with so much vivacity, that I alarmed Basil, who, looking upon me already as a man who would put every thing in practice to seduce Antonia, went out of my apartment with her in a hurry, resolved perhaps to withdraw her from my eyes for ever.

Scipio, seeing himself alone with me, said with a smile, "Here is another resource against the tedious hours. I did not know that your farmer had such a handsome daughter, having never before seen her, though I have been twice at her father's house: he must be at great pains to conceal her; and I commend his care. Egad, she's a delicate morsel! But," added he, "I believe I need not say so to you, who were dazzled by her at first sight." "I don't deny it," answered I. "Ah! my child, I thought I saw a celestial substance. She inflamed me all of a sudden, and pierced my heart with an arrow swift as lightning."

"I am ravished," replied my secretary, "to

learn that you are at last in love. You wanted a mistress to make you enjoy perfect happiness in your solitude. Thank heaven, you have now all sorts of conveniences. I know," continued he, "that we shall have some difficulty in deceiving the vigilance of Basil; but leave that to me; I undertake in three days to procure for you a private interview with Antonia." "Mr. Scipio," said I, "perhaps you might not be able to keep your promise; but this is not what I am curious to try. I have no intention to tempt the virtue of that girl, who seems to deserve that I should entertain other sentiments of her. Wherefore, far from exacting of your zeal that you should assist me in dishonoring her, I am resolved, by your mediation, to espouse her, provided her heart is not engaged to another." "I did not expect," said he, "to see you take such a sudden resolution to marry. Many country gentlemen in your place would not deal so honorably; they would never entertain legitimate views with regard to Antonia, until they had tried others to no purpose. But, however," added he, "don't imagine that I condemn your love, and seek to dissuade you from your design. Your farmer's daughter deserves the honor you intend for her, if she can bestow upon you a heart unengaged, and sensible of your generosity. This I must inform myself of to-day, in a conversation with the father, and perhaps with herself."

My confidant, who was a punctual man in

performing his promises, went privately to visit Basil, and in the evening came to me in my closet, where I waited with impatience mingled with fear. Drawing a good omen from his cheerful look, "If I may believe," said I, "that smile on thy face, thou comest to signify that I shall soon enjoy my wish." "Yes, my dear master," he replied, "every thing is propitious to you. I have had a conversation with Basil and his daughter, to whom I declared your intention. The father is overjoyed to hear you design to be his son-in-law; and I can assure you, that you are very much to Antonia's taste." "O heaven!" cried I, in a transport of joy, "what! am I so happy as to be agreeable to that lovely creature?" "Doubtless," he resumed. "She already loves you. I have not indeed drawn that confession from her mouth; but I am convinced of her passion, by the gaiety she discovered when she understood your design. Nevertheless," added he, "you have a rival." "A rival," cried I, changing colour. "You need not be much alarmed," said he; "that rival will not rob you of the heart of your mistress; he is no other than Mr. Joachim your cook." "Ah! the hang-dog!" said I, bursting into a fit of laughter; "this was his reason for shewing such reluctance to quit my service." "The very same," answered Scipio. "He some days ago demanded Antonia in marriage, and met with a polite refusal." "With deference to thy better advice," I resumed, "methinks it will be proper to rid ourselves of the

rogue, before he can get notice that I intend to marry Basil's daughter; a cook, thou knowest, is a dangerous rival." "You are in the right," replied my confidant; "we must clear the house of him. I will give him his leave to-morrow morning before he begins to work, and then you shall have nothing to fear either from his sauces or his love. I am sorry, however, to lose such an excellent cook, but I sacrifice my palate to your safety." "Thou needest not regret him so much," said I; "the loss is not irreparable: I will send to Valencia for a cook as good as he." And indeed I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso that I had occasion for a cook, and the very next day he sent one who consoled Scipio at once.

Although the zealous secretary had told me that he perceived Antonia was pleased in her heart with the conquest which she had made of her master, I durst not depend upon his report, being apprehensive that he might have been deceived by false appearances. To be more sure of the matter, I resolved to speak in person to the fair Antonia; and repairing to Basil's house, confirmed what my ambassador had told him. That honest peasant, a man of frankness and simplicity, having heard my design, assured me that he would bestow his daughter upon me with the utmost satisfaction; "but," added he, "don't think that it is on account of your being lord of the manor. Were you still no more than the steward of Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, I would prefer you to

all the other suitors who present themselves. I have always had a regard for you; and what gives me the most concern is, that Antonia cannot bring you a large fortune." "I ask nothing with her," said I; "her person is all the wealth to which I aspire." "Your most humble servant," cried he; "that is not my intention: I am not such a beggar as to marry my daughter in that manner. Basil de Buenotrigo is in a condition, thank God, to give her a dowry; and for every dinner you bestow upon her, she shall afford a supper to you. In a word, the rent of your estate, which is but five hundred ducats, shall amount to a thousand, by virtue of this marriage."

"You shall do in that as you please, my dear Basil," I replied; "we shall have no disputes about interest; and now that we are agreed, the sole business is to obtain the consent of your daughter." "You have mine," said he, "and that is enough." "Not altogether," answered I; "if yours is necessary, hers is so too." "Hers depends upon me," said he; "I would fain see her refuse." "Antonia," I resumed, "submissive to paternal authority, is ready, without doubt, to obey you implicitly; but I don't know if she can do it upon this occasion without reluctance; and if she can't, I should never be consoled for having made her unhappy; in short, it is not enough for me to obtain her hand of you, unless her heart goes to the bargain." "By'r lady!"

said Basil, "I don't understand all this philosophy: speak yourself to Antonia, and you shall see, if I am not mistaken, that she desires no better than to be your wife. So saying, he called his daughter, and left me alone with her for a minute or two.

That I might enjoy the precious opportunity, I came to the point at once. "Fair Antonia," said I, "determine my fate. Although I have your father's consent, don't think that I intend to avail myself of it, in doing violence to your inclination. Charming as it is, I renounce the possession of you, if you say that I must owe it to your obedience only." "That is what I will not say," answered she: "your addresses are too agreeable to give me pain; and, instead of murmuring, I approve of my father's choice. I don't know," continued she, "whether I do well or ill in talking thus; but if you were disagreeable to me I should be frank enough to own it; why then may I not say the contrary with the same freedom?"

At these words which I could not hear without being charmed, I kneeled before Antonia, and, in the excess of my joy, seizing one of her fair hands, kissed it with the utmost tenderness and passion. "My dear Antonia," said I, "I am enchanted with your frankness; continue the same unconstrained behaviour; and as you speak to your husband, disclose your whole soul to his view. May I then flatter myself that you will be pleased to see your fortune joined to mine?" Basil coming

in at that instant, hindered me from proceeding. Impatient to know his daughter's answer, and ready to grumble, had she shewn the least aversion for me, "Well," said he, "are you satisfied with Antonia?" "I am so well satisfied with her," answered I, "that I will this very moment go and make preparations for my marriage." So saying, I took my leave of the father and daughter, to go and consult with my secretary on that subject.

CHAP. IX.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NUPTIALS OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR ANTONIA WERE CELEBRATED; AND THE REJOICINGS WITH WHICH THEY WERE ATTENDED.

Although I was under no necessity of obtaining the permission of the noblemen of Leyva, Scipio and I concluded that we could not in honor omit imparting to them my design of marrying Basil's daughter, and of asking their consent, out of good manners.

I set out immediately for Valencia, where they were as much surprised to see me, as to hear the cause of my journey. Don Cæsar and his son having seen Antonia more than once, congratulated me on my choice. Don Cæsar, especially, complimented me upon it with such vivacity, that if I had not believed him to be a man quite weaned from certain amusements, I should have suspected that he had gone sometimes to Lirias, to see his farmer's daughter, rather than to visit his own house. Seraphina, after having assured me that she would always bear a large part in what should concern me, said she had heard a very good character of Antonia; "but," added she with a satirical look, as if she reproached me for the indifference with which I repaid Sephora's passion, "if I had

not heard her beauty extolled, I should depend upon your taste, the delicacy of which I know."

Don Cæsar and his son not only approved of my marriage, but declared that they would defray the whole expense of it. "Go back to Lirias," said they, "and make yourself easy until you hear from us. Make no preparation for your nuptials, but leave that to our care." In compliance with their desire, I returned to my house, and making Basil and his daughter acquainted with the intention of our patrons, we waited their order, as patiently as we could. During eight days, however, we received none: but to make amends, on the ninth, a coach and four arrived, full of mantua-makers, and rich stuffs for the bride's clothes, and escorted by several men in livery, mounted on mules. One of them brought a letter for me, from Don Alphonso, importing that he would be at Lirias next day, with his father and spouse, and that the ceremony of my marriage should be celebrated on the day following, by the grand vicar of Valencia. Accordingly, Don Cæsar, his son, and Seraphina, did not fail to come with that clergyman, all four together in a coach and six, preceded by another drawn by four, in which were Seraphina's women, and attended by the governor's guards.

My lady governess was scarce arrived, when she expressed the utmost impatience to see Antonia, who, on her part, no sooner understood that

Seraphina was alighted, than she ran to salute her, and kissed her hand with such a good grace, that all the company admired her politeness. "Well, madam," said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, "what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillane have made a better choice?" "No, indeed," replied Seraphina; "they are worthy of each other, and I don't doubt that their union will be perfectly happy." In short, every one praised the bride; and if she was much applauded in her country garb, every body was charmed with her when she appeared in a richer dress. Her air was so noble, and her deportment so easy, that one would have thought she had never wore any other.

The moment being arrived, in which propitious Hymen was to join my fate to hers, Don Alphonso, taking me by the hand, led me to the altar, while Seraphina did the same honor to the bride. In this order we repaired to the village chapel, where the vicar attended to marry us; and that ceremony was performed amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and all the rich farmers in the neighborhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding, with their daughters dressed in ribbons and flowers, holding tabors in their hands. We then returned to my house, where, by the care of Scipio, who was contriver of the feast, we found three tables covered, one for the noblemen, another for their attendants, and the third, which was the largest, for the rest of

the guests. Antonia sat at the first, by desire of the lady governess; I did the honours of the second, and Basil took care of the third. As for Scipio, he did not sit, but went from one table to another, employing himself in serving and satisfying every individual.

As the entertainment was prepared by the governor's cooks, it could not fail of being complete in all its parts. The good wines, of which Mr. Joachim had made ample provision, were drank with profusion; the guests began to wax warm, and mirth and jollity reigned, when we were, all of a sudden, interrupted by an incident that alarmed me. My secretary, being in the hall where I sat at table with the principal officers of Don Alphonso and Seraphina's women, fell down upon the floor without sense or motion. I ran to his assistance, and while I was busied in bringing him to himself again, one of the women fainted away. All the company concluded that there must be some mystery in this double swooning, as it actually concealed one, which in a little time was explained; for, soon after, Scipio recovered his spirits, and said to me softly, "Why should the happiest of your days be the most disagreeable of mine? It is impossible for one to shun his destiny," added he: "I have found my wife in the person of one of Seraphina's maids."

"What do I hear!" cried I; "that is not possible; what! art thou the husband of the lady who was taken ill at the same time with thee?"

"Yes, Sir," he replied, "I am her husband; and fortune, I swear, could not play me a more villanous trick than that of bringing her to my view." "I don't know, my friend," said I, "what reason thou hast to complain of thy wife; but, whatever cause she may have given thee, pray constrain thyself; if thou lovest me, do not disturb this entertainment by showing thy resentment." "You shall be satisfied with my behaviour," replied Scipio, "and see whether or not I can dissemble."

So saying, he went up to his wife, who, by the assistance of her companions, was also recovered, and embracing her with the appearance of as much passion as if he had been ravished to see her again. "Ah! my dear Beatrice," said he, "heaven unites us again, after ten years of separation: O happy moment for me!" "I don't know," answered his wife, "whether or not you really feel any joy in meeting me here; but this I am certain of, I gave you no just cause to leave me. What! you found me one night with Signior Don Fernand de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I assisted; and you took it in your head that I listened to him, at the expense of your and my honour: thereupon jealousy turned your brain: you quitted Toledo, and fled from me as from a monster, without deigning to come to an explanation! Which of us two, if you please, has the most reason to complain?" "You, to be sure," replied Scipio. "Yes, doubt-

less," said she. "Don Fernand, soon after your departure from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I staid as long as she lived; and since we were robbed of her by an untimely death, I have been in the service of my lady her sister, who, as well as her women, can answer for the purity of my morals."

My secretary, at this discourse, the falsity of which he could not prove, behaved as became him. "Once more," said he to his wife, "I own my fault, and ask pardon before this honorable assembly." Then I interceding for him, begged that Beatrice would forget what was past; assuring her, that, for the future, her husband's sole study should be to give her satisfaction. She yielded to my intreaty, and the whole company applauded their re-union; for the better celebration of which they were made to sit by one another; their health was toasted; every body complimented them; and the feast seemed to have been made rather on account of their reconciliation than of my nuptials.

The third table was the first forsaken. The young peasants got up to dance with the country maids, who, by the noise of their tabors, soon brought the company from the other rooms, and inspired them with the desire of following their example. Every body was now in motion: the governor's officers began to dance with the attendants of my lady governess; the noblemen themselves mingled in the diversion. Don Al-

phonso danced a saraband with Seraphina. Don Cæsar performed with Antonia, who came afterwards and took me out, acquitting herself pretty well, considering that she had only received a few lessons in the house of a relation, who was the wife of a citizen of Albarazin. As for me, who had learned in the house of the Marchioness of Chaves, the assembly looked upon me as a great dancer. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a private conversation to dancing, and gave each other an account of what had happened to them since their parting: but they were interrupted by Seraphina, who, being informed of their meeting, sent for them to express her joy at their reconciliation. "My children," said she, "on this day of rejoicing, it is an addition to my satisfaction to see you restored to each other. Friend Scipio, I give you back your spouse, and protest to you, that her conduct has always been irreproachable: you may live here happily together; and you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and be as much devoted to her as your husband is to Signior de Santillane." Scipio, after this, could not help looking upon his wife as another Penelope, and promised to treat her with all imaginable affection.

The young peasants and their partners having danced all day, retired to their own houses; but the festival was continued at the castle, where a magnificent supper was prepared; and when it was time to go to rest, the grand vicar blessed the

nuptial bed; Seraphina undressed the bride, and the noblemen of Leyva did me the same honor. What was merry enough, the officers of Don Alphonso, and the ladies of the governess, took it in their heads to perform the same ceremony to Beatrice and Scipio, who, to make the scene more comical, very gravely allowed themselves to be stript and put to bed.

CHAP. X.

WHAT FOLLOWED THE MARRIAGE OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR ANTONIA. THE BEGINNING OF SCIPIO'S HISTORY.

On the very next day after my marriage, the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having given me a thousand new marks of friendship; so that my secretary and I remained in the house, with our wives and servants only.

The care which both of us took to please the ladies was not ineffectual: in a little time I inspired my wife with as much love for me as I had for her; and Scipio made his spouse forget the sorrows which he had made her suffer. Beatrice, who had a pliant, obliging temper, easily insinuated herself into the favor, and gained the confidence of her mistress. In short, we agreed, all four, to admiration, and began to enjoy a situation worthy of envy. All our days glided away in the most agreeable amusements. Antonia was naturally grave, but Beatrice and I were very gay; and had we been otherwise, Scipio's presence was enough to keep off melancholy. He was an incomparable fellow for society; one of those comical creatures, whose appearance alone can make a company merry.

One day that we took a whim, after dinner, to go and take a siesta in the most agreeable place

of the wood, my secretary was in such good humor, that he banished all desire of sleeping, by his merry discourse. "Hold thy tongue, friend," said I; "or if thou art resolved to keep us from taking our nap, entertain us with some story worthy of our attention."

"With all my heart, Sir," answered he; "shall I recount the history of King Pelagius?"* "I would rather hear thy own," I replied; "but that is a pleasure thou hast not thought proper to give me since we lived together, nor ever will, I suppose." "And what is the reason?" said he. "If I have not recounted my own history, it was because you never expressed the least desire to hear it; it is not, therefore, my fault that you are ignorant of my adventures; and if you are in the least curious to know them, I am ready to satisfy your curiosity." Antonia, Beatrice, and I took him at his word, and disposed ourselves in order to hear his narration, which could not miss of having a good effect, either in diverting or lulling us asleep.

"Had it depended upon me," said Scipio, "I should have been the son of some grandee, or knight of Alcantara at least; but as one does not

* Pelagius, the first king of Leon, reigned in the eighth century; and he lived some time in subjection to the Saracens in Spain; but resolving to shake off the yoke of such barbarous tyranny, he put himself at the head of the Christians who had fled for refuge to the Asturian mountains; and being declared king, took arms against the infidels, whom having vanquished in a bloody battle, he laid the foundation of the kingdom of Leon, in which he reigned twenty years.

choose his own father, you must know that mine was an honest soldier of the holy brotherhood, Torribio Scipio by name. While he was travelling to and fro on the highway, where his profession obliged him almost always to be, he met, by accident, one day, between Cuença and Toledo, a young gipsy, whom he thought very handsome. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole fortune in a kind of knapsack on her back: "Which way do you go, my dear?" said he to her, softening his voice, which was naturally rough. "Signior cavalier," answered she, "I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood in some shape or other." "That is a laudable intention," he resumed, "and I don't doubt that you have more strings than one to your bow." "Yes, thank God!" said she, "I have more talents than one; I can compose pomatums and essences for the ladies; I tell fortunes; turn the sieve to find things that are lost; and show all that people want to see in a glass or mirror."

Torribio concluding that such a girl would be a very advantageous match for him, who could scarce live by his employment, though he was very dexterous at it, offered to marry her: she accepted the proposal, and they repaired with all diligence to Toledo, where they were wedded; and you see in me the worthy fruit of these noble nuptials. They settled in the suburbs, where my mother began to sell pomatums and essences; but that trade not answering, she became a fortune-

teller. It was then that she saw the crowns and pistoles shower upon her; a thousand dupes of both sexes soon raised the reputation of Coscolina, which was the gipsy's name. Somebody came every day, to beg she would employ her ministry for him: sometimes a needy nephew, who wanted to know when his uncle, whose sole heir he was, would set out for the other world? and sometimes a girl, wishing to know if a certain cavalier, to whom she had granted the favor, on promise of marriage, would keep his word?

Please to observe that my mother's predictions were always favorable to those who solicited them: if they proved true, good and well; but when they came back to reproach her, because the contrary of what she had prophesied came to pass, she answered coldly, that they must attribute it to the demon, who, notwithstanding the force of the conjurations that she employed to make him reveal what would happen, was sometimes so malicious as to deceive her.

When my mother, for the honor of her profession, thought she must make the devil appear in her operations, Torribio Scipio always acted that part, which he performed perfectly well; the roughness of his voice, and ugliness of his face, giving him an appearance suitable to the character which he represented. Those that were in the least timorous, were always terrified by my father's figure. But one day, unfortunately, there came a brutal fellow of a captain to see the devil, whom

he ran through the body. The holy office, informed of the devil's death, sent its officers to the house of Coscolina, whom they seized, with all her effects; and I, who was then but seven years old, was put into the hospital of *Los Ninos*.* There were in that house charitable clergymen, who, being well paid for the education of poor orphans, were at the trouble of teaching them to read and write. They looked upon me as a promising child, and on that account distinguished me from the rest, by choosing me to run on their errands. They sent me into the city with letters and messages; and I made the responses at mass. By way of recompense, they undertook to teach me the Latin tongue; but they behaved so rudely, and treated me with such rigor, notwithstanding the small services I did them, that, being no longer able to bear it, I ran away one morning early, when I was sent out on an errand; and far from returning to the hospital, quitted Toledo by the suburbs that lie on the Seville side of the city. Though I was scarce yet nine years old, I felt a sensible pleasure in being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money, and without food; but what did that signify? I had no lessons to study, nor themes to compose. After having walked about two hours, my little legs began to refuse their service: I had never before made such a long journey; and I found myself obliged to halt, and give

* Los Ninos, orphans, or rather boys.

them some rest. I sat down under a tree by the side of the road; and there, for my amusement, took my rudiments out of my pocket, and read it in sport; then remembering the stripes and floggings which it had made me receive, I tore out the leaves, saying in great wrath, "Ah, dog of a book! thou shalt never make me shed tears again." While I thus glutted my revenge, strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, a hermit passed by, with a white beard, large spectacles, and a venerable air. He came up to me, and we examined each other with great eagerness. "My little gentleman," said he, smiling, "we seem to look at one another with great attention: I believe it would not be a bad scheme for us to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards from hence." "I am your humble servant," answered I, hastily: "I have no ambition to be a hermit." The good old man laughed at this reply; and embracing me, said, "Don't be frightened at my dress, my son; though it is not agreeable, it is useful; it makes me lord of a charming retreat, and of the neighbouring villages; the inhabitants of which love, or rather idolize me. "Come along with me," added he, "and I will give you a jacket like this that I wear. If you choose it, you shall share with me the sweets of my retired life; and if you don't like it upon trial, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may be also assured, that I will not fail to give you a gratification at parting." I

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J. Smith sc. 1 Clements Inn. Strand

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suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who asked me several questions, to which I answered with an ingenuousness which I have not always preserved in the sequel. When we came to the hermitage, he presented to me some fruit, which I devoured, having eaten nothing the whole day but a morsel of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted in the morning at the hospital. The anchorite, seeing me make such good use of my jaws, said, "Courage, my child; don't spare the fruit; I have ample provision of it, thank God! and I did not bring thee hither to let thee starve." This was indeed very true; for in less than an hour after our arrival he lighted a fire, spitted a leg of mutton; and while I turned the spit, covered a small table with a very dirty napkin, upon which he laid two plates, one for himself, and another for me. When the mutton was ready, he took it off the spit, and cut some slices for our supper, which was not a dry meal; for we drank excellent wine, of which also he had good store. "Well, my chicken," said he, when we had done eating, "art thou satisfied with my ordinary? This is the manner in which thou wilt be treated every day, if thou livest with me. Besides, thou shalt do what thou pleasest in this hermitage. All that I exact of thee is, to accompany me when I go a begging through the neighbouring villages, and lead an ass with two panniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with eggs, bread, flesh, and fish. This is all I require of thee."

"I will do every thing you desire," I replied, "provided you don't oblige me to learn Latin." Brother Chrysostom (that was the old hermit's name) could not help laughing at my simplicity; and assured me anew, that he did not intend to force my inclination.

We went a-begging the very next day with the ass, which I led by the halter, and reaped a plentiful harvest, every peasant being glad of an opportunity to put something in our panniers: one threw in a whole loaf; another, a large piece of bacon; a third, a partridge; in short, we brought home victuals enough for eight days; a circumstance that denotes the great friendship and esteem that the country people had for the hermit. It is true he was of great use to them, in giving them his advice when they came to consult him, in re-establishing peace in families where discord reigned, in marrying their daughters, in furnishing them with remedies for a thousand sorts of diseases, and in teaching prayers proper for barren women who wished to have children.

By what I have said, you see that I was well fed in my hermitage: I was as well accommodated in point of sleeping; stretched upon good fresh straw, with a cushion of coarse cloth under my head, and a covering of the same stuff over my body, I made but one nap, which lasted all night long. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised to give me a hermit's garb, made one for me from an old robe which he used to wear, and

called me little brother Scipio. As soon as I appeared in the villages in that regular habit, I was thought so handsome, that the ass was better loaded than formerly: the business was, who should give most to the little brother, with whose figure they were so well pleased.

The easy idle life which I led with the old hermit, could not be disagreeable to a boy of my age: accordingly, I liked it so well, that I should have continued there still, if the Fates had not spun for me days of a very different kind; but the destiny which I was bound to fulfil soon detached me from idleness, and made me quit brother Chrysostom, as you shall hear. I frequently perceived the old man at work upon the cushion that served him for a pillow; he did nothing but sew and unsew it; and I observed one day that he put money into it. This remark was attended by a curiosity which I proposed to gratify the very first journey he should take to Toledo, whither he was wont to go once a-week. I waited impatiently for the day, without having as yet any other design than of satisfying my curiosity. At length the old man set out, and I ripped up his pillow, where I found among the wool with which it was filled, the value of about fifty crowns in different sorts of coin.

This treasure, in all probability, was the gratitude of the country people whom the hermit had cured by his remedies and of the women who had been blessed with children by virtue of his prayers,

Be this as it will, I no sooner saw that it was money which I could appropriate to myself with impunity, than my Egyptian disposition prevailed. I was seized with a desire of stealing it, which can be attributed to nothing but the force of that blood which circulated in my veins. I yielded to the temptation without resistance, secured the money in a kind of bag where we kept our combs and night-caps; then quitting my hermit's habit, and resuming that of the orphan, I ran away from the hermitage, believing that I carried off in my bag the whole riches of the Indies.

You have heard my beginning (continued Scipio), and I don't doubt that you expect a train of facts of the same nature: your expectation will not be deceived; I have many other such exploits to recount, before I come to my laudable actions: but I will come to them at last; and you will see by my narration, that a rogue may very well turn an honest man.

Child as I was, I was not fool enough to return to Toledo; that would have been exposing me to the chance of meeting brother Chrysostom, who would have made me restore my treasure in a very disagreeable manner: I followed another road, which conducted me to the village of Galves, where I stopt at an inn, the landlady of which was a widow of forty, who had all the qualities requisite for turning the penny. This woman no sooner cast her eyes upon me, than judging by my dress that I was a fugitive from the orphan hospital, she

asked who I was, and whither I went? I answered that having lost both father and mother, I wanted to go to service. "Child," said she, "canst thou read?" I assured her that I both read and wrote to admiration. Indeed, I could form my letters and join them in such a manner as somewhat resembled writing, and that is enough for the occasions of a village tavern. "I take thee into my service," said the landlady; "thou wilt not be altogether useless, but shalt keep an account of all my debts, active and passive. I will give thee no wages," added she, "because the good company that come here never forget the servants; so that thou mayst depend upon receiving good perquisites."

I accepted the proposal, reserving to myself, as you may well believe, the right of changing the air as soon as my stay at Galves should become disagreeable. When I found myself engaged in the service of this inn, I became very uneasy in my mind: I did not desire to be thought a monied man; and was very anxious to know where I should conceal my hoard, so as that it should be secure from every stranger's hand. I did not as yet know the house well enough, to trust to those places which seemed most proper to secure it. With what perplexities are riches attended! I determined, however, to put my bag in a corner of our corn-loft, where there was straw; and believing it more safe there than in any other place, made myself as easy as possible. There

were three servants in this house, a fat hostler, a young maid of Galicia, and myself; each of us drew as much as we could from the travellers that halted, whether they came on horseback or a-foot. I commonly caught some halfpence of these gentlemen when I brought in the bill; they gave something also to the hostler for taking care of their beasts: but as for the Galician, who was the idol of all the carriers that passed, she got as many crowns as we did farthings. Every penny that I received I carried to increase my treasure in the corn-loft; and the more I saw my wealth increase, the more did I feel my little heart attached to it: I sometimes kissed the specie, and contemplated the different pieces with a degree of rapture which none but misers can conceive.

This affection for my treasure obliged me to go and visit it thirty times a day: I frequently met the landlady upon the stairs; and she being naturally distrustful, was curious one day to know what it was that could bring me every moment to the corn-loft. Thither, therefore, she went, and searched every corner, imagining that I perhaps concealed in that place some things which I had stole in the house. She did not forget to remove the straw that covered my bag, which having found, she opened it; and seeing crowns and pistoles appear, believed, or pretended to believe, that I had stole them from her. She seized the sum total accordingly: then, calling me little wretch and little rascal, ordered the hostler, who

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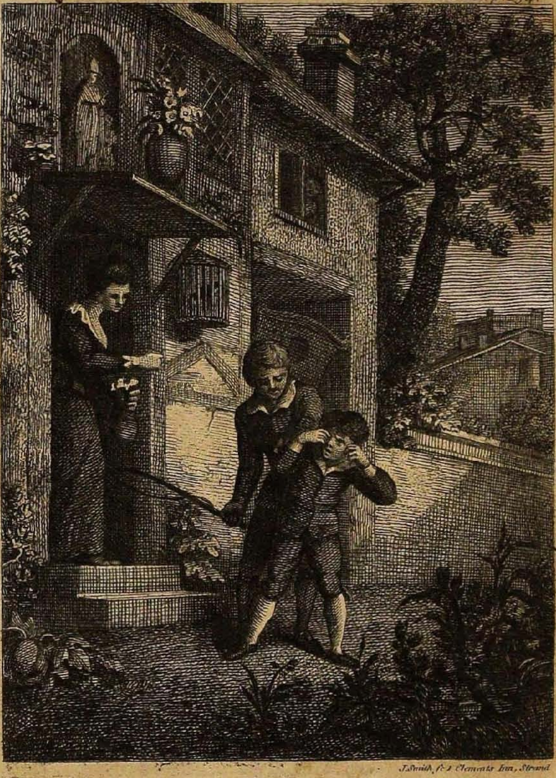

J. Smith, sc. 2 Clements Inn, Strand

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was entirely devoted to her will, to give me fifty good lashes, which when I had received, she turned me out of doors, saying, that she would suffer no knave to live in her house. In vain did I protest that I had not robbed the landlady: she maintained the contrary; and of course her word was believed rather than mine. Thus, brother Chrysostom's money passed from one thief to another.

I lamented the loss of my money, as a man mourns the death of an only child; and though my tears did not retrieve what I had lost, at least they excited the compassion of some people who saw them shed; and among others, of the curate of Galves, who was passing by chance. He seemed moved at my melancholy condition, and carried me along with him to the parsonage; where, in order to gain my confidence, or rather pump me, he began by pitying my situation. "How much," said he, "does this poor child deserve compassion! It is not surprising, if, abandoned to himself in such a tender age, he has committed a bad action. Most men find it difficult to live honest through the whole course of their lives." Then addressing himself to me, "My son," added he, "from what part of Spain do you come, and who are your parents? You seem to be of some good family. Tell me ingenuously, and be assured that I will not abandon you."

The curate, by this politic and charitable dis-

course, engaged me insensibly to discover all my affairs with great sincerity. I made a general confession. After which he said, "Friend, though it does not become hermits to hoard up money, that does not lessen your crime; in robbing brother Chrysostom, you have transgressed that article of the Decalogue which forbids theft: but I'll oblige the landlady to restore the money, which I will send to the hermit; so that your conscience may be easy on that score." But this, I swear, was the least of my uneasiness. The curate, who had a design of his own, did not stop there: "My child," said he, "I interest myself in your behalf, and will procure a good place for you. I will to-morrow send you by a carrier to my nephew, who is a canon of the cathedral of Toledo; he will not refuse, at my request, to receive you into the number of his lackeys, who live plentifully, like so many incumbents, on the revenue of his prebend; you will be perfectly well situated, I can assure you."

I was so much consoled by this assurance, that I no longer thought of the bag, nor of the stripes which I had received, my mind being wholly possessed with the pleasure of living like an incumbent. Next day, while I was at breakfast, a carrier came to the parsonage, according to the curate's orders, with two mules bridled and saddled. I was helped up on the one, the carrier mounted the other, and we set out for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a fellow of humour, who

liked nothing better than to make himself merry at another's expense. "My little junior," said he, "you have a good friend in the curate of Galves; he could not give you a better proof of his affection than that of recommending you to the service of his nephew the canon, whom I have the honor to know, and who is, without contradiction, the pearl of the whole chapter. He is none of those devotees whose pale and meagre faces preach up mortification. He has a capacious countenance, a rosy complexion, a merry look, is a jovial soul, who enjoys the present hour, and in particular loves good cheer. You will live in his house like a little prince.

The rogue of a carrier perceiving that I listened with great satisfaction, continued to extol the happiness I should enjoy in the canon's service; and did not leave off speaking until we arrived at the village of Obisa, where we stopt a little to bait our mules. The carrier, while he walked about in the inn, let fall by accident, out of his pocket, a paper, which I was cunning enough to pick up without being observed, and which I found means to read while he was in the stable. It was a letter directed to the priests of the orphan hospital, and conceived in these terms:

"GENTLEMEN, I thought I was bound in charity to send back to you a little knave, who is a runaway from your hospital. He does not seem to want capacity, but deserves to be carefully

mewed up: and I hope that, by proper correction, he will in time do well. That God may preserve your pious and charitable worships,' is the prayer of

THE CURATE OF GALVES."

When I had read this letter, which informed me of the curate's good intentions, I did not long hesitate. To leave the inn, and gain the banks of the Tagus, which was more than a league from thence, was the work of a moment. Fear lent me wings to fly from the priests of the orphan hospital, to whom I would by no means return, so much was I disgusted with their manner of teaching the Latin tongue. I entered Toledo as gaily as if I had known where to board. True, it is a city of benediction, in which a man of genius, reduced to the necessity of living at his neighbour's expense, cannot die of hunger. Scarce had I arrived in the market-place, when a well-dressed cavalier, whom I passed, laid hold of my arm, and said, "Harkee, my boy, will you serve me? I should be glad to have such a lackey as you." "And I should be glad," answered I, "to have such a master as you." "If that be the case," he resumed, "thou art mine from this moment. Follow me." This I did, without making any farther reply.

This cavalier, who might be about thirty years of age, and was called Don Abel, lodged in a house where he possessed a very handsome apartment.

He was by profession a gamester, and we lived together in this manner:—In the morning I cut as much tobacco for him as would fill five or six pipes, brushed his clothes, and went for the barber to shave him and dress his whiskers: after which he went out, and made a tour among the tennis courts, from whence he returned about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. But each morning before he went out, he gave me three rials for my day's expense, leaving me at liberty to do what I pleased until ten o'clock at night: he was very well satisfied with me, provided he found me at home when he returned: he ordered a doublet and hose of livery to be made for me, so that I looked like a page of a lady of the town. I was very well satisfied with my place, and certainly I could not have found one more agreeable to my humor.

I had led this happy life almost a whole month, when my master asked if I was pleased with his behaviour? I answered, that I could not be more so. "Well then," he resumed, "we shall set out to-morrow for Seville, whither my affairs call me. Thou wilt not be sorry to see that capital of Andalusia?

"He that hath not Seville seen,"

saith the proverb,

"Is no traveller, I ween."

I assured him, that I was ready to follow him whithersoever he should go. That very day, the Seville carrier came to his lodging, to fetch a large

coffer that contained all his moveables; and in the morning we set out for Andalusia.

Signior Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he never lost, except when he chose to lose. This talent often obliged him to change his place of habitation, that he might avoid the resentment of dupes; and this was the cause of our present journey. Being arrived at Seville, we took lodgings near the gate of Cordova, and began to live as we had lived at Toledo: but my master found a difference between these two cities. In the tennis courts of Seville, he met with gamesters who played as successfully as he, so that he came home sometimes very much out of humor. One morning, being chagrined at the loss of one hundred pistoles which he ventured the preceding day, he asked why I had not carried the dirty linen to a woman whom he employed to wash and perfume it? I answered, that I had forgot. Upon which, falling into a passion, he gave me half a dozen boxes on the face, so rudely, that he made me see more candles than ever burnt in Solomon's temple. "There, little wretch," said he, "there is something to make you mind your business. Must I always be at your tail, to tell you what you have to do? why are you not as ready to work as to eat? are you such a beast as to be incapable of anticipating my orders and occasions?" So saying, he went out of his apartment, leaving me very much mortified at the blows I had received for such a slight fault. I don't know what adventure

happened to him soon after in the tennis court, but one evening he came home very much heated, and said, "Scipio, I am resolved to go to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow, in a ship bound for Genoa. I have my own reasons for making that voyage; wilt thou not accompany me, and lay hold of such a fair occasion to see the most delightful country in the world?" I said I would, but at the same time proposed to disappear just when he intended to embark. I thought I would revenge myself of him in this manner, and was very well pleased with the scheme, which I could not help imparting to a professed bravo whom I met in the street; for since my arrival at Seville, I had contracted some bad acquaintances, and this in particular. I told him in what manner and for what I had been buffeted, then communicated my design of leaving Don Abel when he should be just ready to go on board, and asked his opinion of my resolution.

The bravo frowned while he listened to me, and twirled the curls of his mustachio; then, blaming my master with an air of gravity, "Little gentleman," said he, "you are dishonored for ever, if you restrict yourself to that frivolous revenge which you have hatched. It is not enough to let Don Abel depart by himself; that would not be punishment sufficient. The chastisement must be proportioned to the injury. Let us therefore carry off his goods and money, which we will share like brothers after he is gone." Although I was na-

turally inclined to thieving, I was frightened at the proposal of such an important robbery. Nevertheless, the arch rogue who made it did not fail to persuade me to it; and you shall hear the success of our enterprise. The bravo, who was a big strong fellow, came to our lodging next day in the twilight, when I showed him the coffer in which my master had already secured his effects, and asked if he could carry such a weight. "Such a weight!" said he; "know, that when the business is to carry off the goods of another, I can lift Noah's ark." So saying he flung the coffer on his shoulders with ease, and went down stairs with it upon tip-toes. I followed him with some caution, and we were just going out at the street-door when Don Abel, brought thither so seasonably by his good genius, appeared all of a sudden.

"Where art thou going with the coffer?" said he. I was so confounded that I stood silent, and the bravo seeing the affair misgive, threw down his load, and betook himself to flight, in order to avoid explanations. "Where art thou going with the coffer?" said my master for the second time. "Sir," answered I, more dead than alive, "I am going to carry it on board the ship in which you are to embark to-morrow for Italy." "Ha!" he replied, "dost thou know in what ship I intended to sail?" "No, Sir," said I, "but I have a tongue in my head, and I should have inquired at the harbour, where somebody would have certainly told me." At this my answer, which he suspected,

he darted such a furious look at me, that I was afraid of a second beating. "Who ordered you," cried he, "to bring my coffer out of the house?" "You yourself," said I. "Don't you remember how you upbraided me some days ago? Did not you say, while you beat me, that you expected I would prevent your orders, and do what was proper for your service of my own accord? Now, it was in consequence of this direction, that I employed one to carry your coffer to the ship." The gamester observing that I was more mischievous than he imagined, dismissed me immediately, saying, with an air of indifference, "Go, Mr. Scipio, and heaven be your guide. I don't choose to play with people who have sometimes a card too many, sometimes one too few. Get out of my sight," added he, in another tone, "lest I make you sing without your gamut." I saved him the trouble of repeating his command, and got off in a twinkling, being woundily afraid that he would strip me of my clothes, which, however, he luckily spared. I walked along the street, considering where I could lay with my two rials, which constituted my whole stock. I arrived at the gate of the archbishop's palace; and as his grace's supper was then dressing, an agreeable savour issued from the kitchen, and diffused itself a whole league around. "Zooks!" said I to myself, "I should like to dispatch one of those ragouts which salute my nose. I should even be contented with an opportunity of dipping my four fingers and thumb in it. What! can't I

fall upon some method of tasting these dainties that smell so agreeably; the thing does not seem so impossible." I whetted my imagination accordingly, and by dint of musing hatched a trick, which I immediately put in practice, and which succeeded to my wish. I entered the court of the palace, and running towards the kitchen, cried, as loud as I could, "Help! help!" as if I had been pursued by some assassin.

At my repeated cries, Mr. Diego, the archbishop's cook, with two or three scullions, came running out to know the cause; and seeing nobody but me, asked why I made such a noise? "Ah! Sir," said I, pretending to be frightened almost out of my wits, "for the love of St. Polycarp, pray save me from the fury of a bravo that wants to kill me."

"Where is this bravo?" cried Diego; "you are quite alone, without so much as a cat at your heels. Go, my child, lay aside your fear. It was probably somebody who wanted to terrify you for his diversion, and who did well not to follow you into this palace; for, if he had, we should have cut off his ears." "No, no," said I to the cook; "he did not pursue me for his diversion. He is a big ill-looking fellow, who intends to strip me, and waits hard by in the street to catch me as I go out." "He shall wait a long time then," he replied, "for you shall stay here till to-morrow, and want for neither supper nor bed."

I was transported with joy when I heard the

words; and it was a ravishing sight to me, when being conducted into the kitchen by Mr. Diego, I beheld the preparations for his grace's supper. I reckoned fifteen persons at work, but I could not number the dishes that I saw, so careful had Providence been in behalf of the archbishop. It was then that, feasting upon the steams of the ragouts, which I had only smelled afar off before, I became acquainted with sensuality. I had the honor to sup and sleep with the scullions, whose friendship I gained to that degree, that next day, when I went to thank Mr. Diego for the asylum he had so generously afforded, he said, "Our kitchen lads tell me they would be glad to have you for a comrade, they like your humor so well: would you choose to be their companion?" I answered, "That if I enjoyed that piece of good fortune, I should think myself perfectly happy." "If that be the case, my friend," said he, "look upon yourself from this moment as an officer of the palace." So saying, he went and presented me to the major-domo, who, on account of my sprightly look, judged me worthy to be received among the turnspits.

I was no sooner in possession of such an honorable employment, than Mr. Diego, according to the custom of cooks in great families, who privately send victuals to their mistresses, chose me to carry to a certain lady in the neighbourhood sometimes loins of veal, and sometimes fowl or venison. This good lady was a widow scarce

turned of thirty, very handsome, very smart, and, to all appearance, not over faithful to her cook, who not only furnished her with victuals, bread, sugar, and oil, but also provided her with good wine, all at the expense of the archbishop.

I was effectually improved in the palace of his grace, where I played a very pleasant prank, which is still spoken of at Seville. The pages and some other domestics, in order to celebrate their master's birth-day, took it in their heads to represent a comedy. They chose that of the *Benavides*;* and as they had occasion for a boy of my age to play the part of the young King of Leon, they cast their eyes upon me. The major-domo, who piqued himself upon his talent of declamation, undertook to instruct me; and after he had given me a few lessons, assured them, that I should not be the worst actor in the play. As our master was at the expense of the entertainment, no cost was spared to render it magnificent. A theatre was built in the largest hall of the palace, and decorated with great taste. There was a bed of turf made in the back scene, on which I was to appear asleep, and the Moors fall upon me to make me prisoner. When the actors were perfect in their parts, the archbishop fixed the day for the representation, and did not fail to invite the most considerable noblemen and ladies of the city to come and see it. The day being come, each actor was busied with his

* Benavides, the sirname of a noble family in Spain, descended from Alfonso the Ninth, king of Castile.

dress. As for mine, it was brought to me by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo; who, having been at the trouble of teaching me my part, was also pleased to superintend my dress. The tailor clothed me with a rich velvet robe, trimmed with gold lace and buttons, with hanging sleeves adorned with fringe of the same metal; and the major-domo himself placed upon my head a crown of paper, powdered with a quantity of fine pearls intermixed with false stones. Besides, they girded me with a sash of pink-coloured silk wrought with silk flowers; and every thing they said to me, seemed to lend me wings to run away with the plunder. At length the play began about twilight. I opened the scene, by pronouncing some verses, importing, that being unable to keep myself awake, I was going to abandon myself to slumber; at the same time I withdrew, and laid down on the bed of turf which had been prepared for me; but, instead of falling asleep, I began to consider how I could get into the street and escape with my royal robes. A little private stair that led down under the theatre into the hall, seemed proper for the execution of my design. I accordingly got up nimbly, and seeing that nobody took notice of me, slipt down that stair, which conducted me into the hall, the door of which I gained, crying, "Room, room, I am going to change my dress." Every one made way for me, so that in less than two minutes I got out of the palace

with impunity, and by favor of the night, repaired to the house of a bravo of my acquaintance.

He was perfectly astonished to see me in that garb; and when I imparted the affair, he laughed until he was ready to burst; then embracing me with so much the more joy, as he flattered himself with the hope of sharing the spoils of the King of Leon, he congratulated me on having performed such a fine stroke, and told me, that if I went on at that rate, my genius would one day make a great noise in the world. After we had sufficiently made ourselves merry, "What shall we do with this rich dress?" said I to the bravo; who answered, "Give yourself no trouble on that score. I know an honest broker, who, without expressing the least curiosity, buys every thing that is brought him, provided he likes the bargain; to-morrow morning I will go and bring him hither." In effect, the bravo went out next day early, leaving me a-bed in his room, and in two hours returned with the broker, who carried a yellow bag under his arm. "Friend," said he to me, "this is Signior Ybagnez de Segovia, who, in spite of the bad example shown by his brethren of the trade, deals with the most scrupulous integrity. He will tell you to a farthing the value of this dress that you want to part with, and you may depend upon his estimation." "Yes, certainly," said the broker. "I must be a wretch indeed, if I prized a thing under the true value. That is a

crime with which I was never taxed, thank God, and no man shall ever lay it to the charge of Ybagnez de Segovia. Let us see the goods you want to sell, and I will conscientiously tell you what they are worth." "Here they are," said the bravo, showing them, "and you must allow, that nothing can be more magnificent: observe the beauty of that Genoa velvet, and the richness of the trimming." "I am quite charmed with it!" replied the broker, after he had viewed it attentively, "nothing can be finer." "And what do you think of the pearls of this crown?" resumed my friend. "If they were more round," said Ybagnez, "they would be inestimable: however, such as they are, I think them very pretty, and like them as well as the rest of the dress. I sincerely own it," continued he, "another rogue of a broker in my place would pretend to despise the merchandize that he might have it cheap, and would not be ashamed of offering twenty pistoles for it; but I, who have some conscience, will give forty."

If Ybagnez had said a hundred, he would not then have been a just appraiser; since the pearls alone were well worth two hundred crowns. The bravo, who had a fellow feeling with him, said to me, "You see how fortunate you are in falling into the hands of an honest man. Signior Ybagnez prizes every thing as if he was upon his deathbed." "That is true," said the broker, "and therefore I never rise or fall a farthing in my

price. Well," added he, "is it a bargain, shall I count out the money to you?" "Stay," replied the bravo, "my friend must first try on this suit of clothes which I desired you to bring for him. I am mistaken if they won't fit him exactly." Then the broker, untying his bundle, showed me a doublet and hose, of a very good dark-coloured cloth, with silver buttons; the whole seemingly half worn. I got up to try this dress, which, though both too long and too wide, appeared to these gentlemen to have been made on purpose for me. Ybagnez rated it at ten pistoles; and as he never abated one farthing of what he asked, we were obliged to comply with his valuation. So he took thirty pistoles out of his purse, and spread them upon the table; after which, he made another bundle of my crown and royal robes, which he carried off accordingly.

When he was gone, the bravo said, "I am very well satisfied with this broker." And good reason he had to be so; for, I am sure, he gave him one hundred pistoles, at least, by way of gratification. But he was not contented with that sum: he took, without ceremony, the half of the money that lay on the table, leaving the other half to me, and saying, "My dear Scipio, with these fifteen pistoles that remain, I advise you to quit this city forthwith: for you may be assured, that the archbishop will give orders to search for you every where. I should be extremely mortified, if, after having signalized yourself by an action which

will do honor to your history, you should foolishly suffer yourself to be apprehended." I answered, that I was fully resolved to leave Seville; and, in effect, after having bought a hat and some shirts, I gained the vast and delightful plain that stretches among the vines and olives to the ancient city of Carmona, and, three days after, arrived at Cordova.*

I lodged at an inn as you enter the great square where the merchants live; and gave myself out for the son of a good family at Toledo, who travelled for my pleasure. I was well enough clothed to make people believe this story, and the landlord was finally convinced, by the sight of some pistoles, which I let him see as if by chance. It is probable, indeed, that my tender years made him believe I was some little libertine, who had run away from his parents, after having robbed them. Be this as it will, he did not seem curious to know more than what I told him of the matter; being, in all likelihood, afraid that his curiosity might make me change my lodging. For six rials a day I lived very well in this inn, which was frequented by a good deal of company; there being at supper

* Cordova, the ancient Corduba, a city of Andalusia, upon the banks of the Guadalquivir; formerly the residence of the Moorish kings. It is famous for having given birth to the two Senecas, the poet Lucan, the great General Gonzales, and many more persons of note. The cathedral was heretofore a mosque, built by the Moors, after the model of Solomon's temple; and reckoned almost equal to that of Mecca in beauty and magnificence, being supported by a vast number of marble columns. This city is also famous for the martyrdom of many saints, who were inhumanly butchered by the infidels.

in the evening no less than twelve people at one table. It was very diverting to see every one eating, without speaking a syllable, except one man, who talking incessantly, at random, compensated for the silence of the rest by his impertinent prating. He affected the wit, told stories, and endeavoured, by quaint sayings, to entertain the company, who from time to time laughed heartily, though not so much at the brightness of his sallies, as at his ridiculous behaviour.

As for my part, I paid so little attention to the discourse of this original, that I should have risen from supper without being able to give any account of what he said, had he not found means to interest me in his conversation. "Gentlemen," said he, towards the end of our meal, "I have kept for the desert a most diverting story; an adventure that befel, a few days ago, at the palace of the Archbishop of Seville. I had it from a bachelor of my acquaintance, who told me that he was present when it happened." These words discomposed me a good deal; I did not doubt that it was my adventure which he intended to recount: and I was not mistaken. This person gave a faithful detail of it, and even informed me of what I did not know; that is, what happened in the hall after my departure: and this you shall hear.

Scarce had I betook myself to flight, when the Moors, who, according to the performance which was represented, were to carry me off, appeared

upon the stage, with a design of surprising me on the bed of turf, where they thought I was asleep; but when they went to seize the King of Leon, they were very much astonished to find neither king nor knave. The play was immediately interrupted; all the actors were perplexed; some called me, others searched for me; one hallooed, and another cursed me. The archbishop perceiving the trouble and confusion that reigned behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. A page, who acted the Gracioso of the piece, hearing the prelate's voice, came out and said to his grace, "My lord, you need not fear that the Moors will take the King of Leon prisoner; he has escaped with his royal robes." "Heaven be praised!" cried the archbishop, "he was very much in the right to fly from the enemies of our religion, and escape the chains which they had prepared for him. He has, doubtless, returned towards Leon, the capital of his kingdom; and I wish he may get home without meeting with any bad accident. Let no man go in pursuit of him, for I should be sorry if his majesty received any mortification from me." The prelate having spoke in this manner, ordered my part to be read, and the play to go on.

CHAP. VII.

THE SEQUEL OF SCIPIO'S HISTORY.

As long as my money lasted, the landlord treated me with great respect; but no sooner did he perceive that my finances were exhausted, than he looked cool upon me, picked a quarrel, and one morning early desired me to leave his house. I quitted it with disdain, and went into a church belonging to the Dominicans, where, while I heard mass, an old mendicant came and asked alms of me. I took two or three maravedis out of my pocket, and giving them to him, said, "Friend, pray to God to send me some good place: if your prayer is heard, you shall not repent of your devotion, and may depend upon my gratitude."

At these words, the beggar viewed me very attentively, and answered, with a serious air, "What post would you have?" "I could wish," said I, "to be a lackey in some good family." He then asked if my occasions were pressing. "They cannot be more so," I resumed: "for, if I have not the good fortune of being settled very soon, there is no medium; I must either die of hunger, or betake myself to your trade." "If you are reduced to such necessity," said he, "you, who are not at all calculated for our business, must be in a very disagreeable situation: but were you in

the least accustomed to our way of life, you would prefer it to servitude, which is, without contradiction, inferior to beggary. Nevertheless, since you choose to be a servant, rather than to live a free and independent life, as I do, you shall have a master immediately. Notwithstanding my appearance, I can be of use to you: therefore, come hither to-morrow at the same hour."

Resolved to be punctual, I returned next day to the same place, where I had not been long, before the mendicant, coming up to me, bid me take the trouble to follow him. I did so; he conducted me to a cellar not far from the church; and this was the place of his residence. We entered his habitation; and sitting down upon a bench, which was at least a hundred years old, he spoke to me in this manner: "A good action, as the proverb says, always finds its recompense; you gave me charity yesterday, and that determines me to procure a place for you; and this, please God, I will soon perform. I am acquainted with an old Dominican, called Father Alexis, who is an holy ecclesiastic, and great confessor. I have the honor to run of his errands, and acquit myself in that employment with so much fidelity and discretion, that he never refuses to use his interest for me and my friends. I have spoke to him of you in such a manner that he is disposed to do you service; and I will present you to his reverence whenever you please." "There is not a moment to lose," said I to the old beggar: "let us go instantly to the

good friar." The mendicant consented, and carried me forthwith to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, busy in writing spiritual letters. He interrupted his work to speak to me, and told me, that, at the request of the mendicant, he would interest himself in my behalf. "Having been informed," added he, "that Signior Balthazar Velasquez wanted a lackey, I wrote this morning in your favor; and he has answered, that he will receive you implicitly on my recommendation. You may, this very day, go to him from me; he is my penitent and friend." The monk, on this occasion, exhorted me, during three quarters of an hour, to do my duty with fidelity and diligence. He enlarged particularly on the obligation I was under to serve Velasquez with zeal; after which, he assured me that he would take care to maintain me in my post, provided my master should be pleased with my behaviour. Having thanked the monk for his generosity, I came out of the convent with the beggar, who told me, that Signior Balthazar Velasquez was an old rich woollen-draper, of great meekness and simplicity. "I dare say," added he, "that you will be perfectly happy in his family." I inquired whereabouts the citizen lived, and went immediately to his house, after having promised to make an acknowledgment to the beggar, as soon as I should take root in my place. I entered a large shop, where two well-dressed apprentices were walking to and fro, in expectation of customers; and asking if their

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J. Smith. sc. 1 Clements Inn, Strand.

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master was at home, told them I had a message to him from Father Alexis. At the mention of that venerable name, I was shewn into the back shop, where the merchant sat at a bureau, turning over the leaves of a large day-book. I saluted him with great respect, saying, while I advanced, "Signior, I am the young man whom the reverend Father Alexis recommended to you for a lackey." "Ha! welcome, my child," said he; "that holy man's recommendation is sufficient. I receive thee into my service in preference to three or four lackeys that were sent by other people. It is agreed: thy wages run up from this day forward."

I had not been long in the service of this citizen, before I perceived him to be just such a man as the beggar had described. His simplicity seemed even so great, that I could not help thinking I should find some difficulty in abstaining from playing him some trick or other. He had been a widower four years, and had two children; a son turned of five-and-twenty, and a daughter going in her fifteenth year, who being brought up by a severe duenna, and directed by Father Alexis, walked in the path of virtue: but Gaspard Velasquez, her brother, though nothing had been spared in his education, had all the vices of a young spendthrift. He sometimes lay two or three nights abroad; and if, at his return, his father took it into his head to reprimand him, Gaspard imposed silence upon him, in a tone still higher than that of the old man.

"Scipio," said the draper to me one day, "I have a son who is the sole plague of my life; he is plunged in all manner of debauchery: a circumstance that surprises me very much; for his education was by no means neglected. I gave him good masters, and my friend Alexis hath done his utmost endeavour to put him in the right road; but he could not succeed: Gaspard is fallen into a state of libertinism. Thou wilt say, perhaps, that I treated him too gently in the beginning of his youth; and that he was undone by my indulgence: but that was not the case; he was always chastised when I thought he deserved to be used with rigor; for, good-natured as I am, I have resolution enough when there is occasion for it. I have even ordered him to be confined; and the consequence was, he became more wicked than ever. In a word, he has one of those bad dispositions which cannot be improved by good example, remonstrances, or chastisement. Heaven alone can work that miracle."

If I was not much moved at the sorrow of this unhappy father, at least I pretended to be so. "How much are you to be pitied, Sir!" said I; "a good man, like you, deserves to have a much better son." "Heaven! my child," answered he, "is pleased to deprive me of that consolation. Among other causes which Gaspard gives me to complain of him," added he, "I will tell thee in confidence, there is one that makes me very uneasy; that is, the inclination which he has to rob

me, and which he but too often finds means to satisfy, in spite of all my vigilance. The lackey whom you succeed was in concert with him, and for that reason turned away. As for thee, I hope thou wilt not suffer thyself to be corrupted by my son; but espouse my interest, as Father Alexis has, doubtless, exhorted thee." "That I'll answer for," said I; "his reverence exhorted me a whole hour to have nothing in view but your advantage: but I can assure you I had no need of being exhorted to that: I feel myself disposed to serve you faithfully, and my zeal will prove itself on all occasions."

He who hears one side only, hears nothing. Young Velasquez, who was a devilish beau, judging by my physiognomy that I would be as easily seduced as my predecessor, took me aside into a private place, and spoke to me in these terms: "Hark'ye, my dear, I am persuaded that my father has charged thee to be a spy upon my actions: take care of thyself: I give thee notice before-hand, that thy employment is none of the most agreeable. If ever I perceive that thou makest thy remarks upon me, I will cudgel thee to death: whereas if thou wilt assist me in cheating my father, thou mayest depend upon my gratitude. Must I be more plain with thee? Thou shalt have a share of the purchase. Make thy choice, therefore, and declare this instant either for the father or son; for I will admit of no neutrality."

"Sir," answered I, "you are very short with me; and I plainly perceive that I cannot help espousing your cause, though in my heart I feel a reluctancy to betray Signior Velasquez." "Thou oughtest to make no scruple in so doing," replied Gaspard: "he is an old miser, who wants to keep me still in leading-strings; a wretch who denies me the necessaries of life, in refusing to furnish me with money for my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessaries of life, at the age of five-and-twenty: thou must therefore look upon my father in that point of view." "Enough, Sir," said I, "there is no such thing as holding out against so just a cause of complaint. I offer my service to second you in your laudable undertakings; but let us conceal our mutual intelligence, that your faithful associate may not be turned out of doors. You will do well, methinks, in affecting to hate me: speak roughly to me before people, and do not spare ill language; even some boxes on the ear, and kicks on the breech, will not be amiss: on the contrary, the more marks of aversion you bestow upon me, the more confidence will Balthazar have in my integrity. As for my part, I will pretend to avoid your conversation: in serving you at table, I will seem to acquit myself with regret; and when I talk of you to the apprentices, don't take it ill that I rail at you with great bitterness."

"Egad!" cried Velasquez, hearing my last words, "I admire thy genius, my friend: thou shewest, at thy age, an astonishing capacity for

intrigue, from whence I conceive the most happy presage; for I hope, with thy assistance, I shall not leave my father one single pistole." "You do me a great deal of honor," said I, "in depending so much on my industry: I will do my utmost endeavour to justify the good opinion you have of my understanding; and if I fail, at least it shall not be my fault."

It was not long before I let Gaspard see that I was actually the man he wanted; and this is the first service I did him: Balthazar's strong box stood in his chamber, just by his bed-side, and served him instead of a pew for prayer. Every time I looked at it, my eye-sight was regaled; and I frequently said to myself, "Friend strong box, must thou be always locked to me? Shall I never have the pleasure of contemplating thy contents?" As I went whenever I pleased into this chamber, which was forbid to nobody but Gaspard, I happened one day to perceive his father, who thinking himself unobserved, after having opened and locked his strong box, concealed the key behind a hanging. I marked the place well, and imparted my discovery to my young master, who embraced me with joy, saying, "Ah, my dear Scipio! what a charming piece of news is this! Our fortune is made, my child. I will this very day give thee wax, with which thou mayest take the impression of the key, and put it into my hands. I shall easily find an obliging locksmith in Cordova; in which, thank heaven, there is no scarcity of rogues."

"But why," said I to Gaspard, "would you make a false key, when we can use the true one?" "Because," answered he, "my father, through distrust, or some other motive, may take it in his head to hide it elsewhere; and therefore it is better to have one for ourselves. I approved of his caution; and, yielding to his inclination, prepared for taking the impression of the key. This was executed one morning early, while my old master paid a visit to Father Alexis, with whom he had usually long conversations. This was not all; I used the key in opening the box, which being filled with large and small bags, threw me into a charming perplexity: I did not know which to choose, such affections did I conceive for both kinds. Nevertheless, as the fear of being surprised did not permit me to make a long scrutiny, I laid hold of one of the largest at a venture: then locking the coffer, and replacing the key behind the hangings, I quitted the chamber with my prey, which I went and concealed under my bed, in a small wardrobe where I lay.

Having performed this operation so successfully, I went immediately to the young Velasquez, who waited for me in a house where he had appointed to meet me, and gave him infinite joy, by telling what I had done. He was so well satisfied, that he loaded me with caresses, and generously offered me the half of the money that was in the bag: but that I refused, saying, "No, no, Sir; the first bag is your own; use it for your occasions: I will soon return to the strong

box, where, thank heaven, there is money enough for us both." In effect, three days after this I carried off a second bag, containing, as the former, five hundred crowns, of which I would receive one fourth only, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Gaspard, that it should be equally divided between us.

As soon as this young man found himself well stocked, and consequently in a condition to satisfy his passion for women and play, he abandoned himself entirely to both: he had even the misfortune to fall in love with one of those famous coquets, who devour and swallow the largest patrimonies in a very little time; and being at a terrible expense on her account, laid me under the necessity of paying so many visits to the strong box, that at length old Velasquez perceived himself robbed. "Scipio," said he one morning, "I must tell thee a secret: somebody robs me, my friend: my strong box has been opened, and several bags taken out: this is certain. Who must be taxed with this theft? Or rather, who else than my son Gaspard, who has entered my chamber by stealth, or been introduced by thee: for I am tempted to believe thee his accomplice, though you seem to hate one another so much. Nevertheless, I will not listen to my suspicion, since Father Alexis hath answered for thy fidelity." I replied, that, thank heaven, I never coveted my neighbour's wealth; and accompanied that lie with an hypocritical grimace, which served instead of an apology.

The old man, sure enough, said no more of the matter; but he did not leave off including me in his suspicion; and taking his precautions against our attempts, ordered his strong box to be secured by another lock, the key of which he always kept in his pocket. By these means, all commerce between us and the bags being broken, we looked very silly, especially Gaspard, who being no longer able to gratify the extravagance of his nymph. was afraid of losing the privilege of visiting her. He had genius enough, however, to invent an expedient which supported his expense a few days longer: and that ingenious shift was, to appropriate to himself, by way of loan, all my share of the evacuations which I had performed on the strong box. I gave it all, to the very last piece; and this, methinks, may pass for anticipated restitution which I made to the old merchant, in the person of his heir.

The young man, when he had exhausted this resource, considering that he had now none left, fell into a profound and gloomy fit of melancholy, which gradually disordered his reason. He looked upon his father as the only plague of his life; he was seized with the most violent despair; and, without listening to the voice of Nature, the wretch conceived the horrible design of poisoning his parent. He not only communicated this execrable project to me, but even proposed that I should be the instrument of his vengeance. Being struck with horror at the proposal, "Sir," said I,

"is it possible that you should be so abandoned by heaven, as to form this abominable resolution? What! are you capable of murdering the author of your own being? Shall it be said, that in Spain, in the very bosom of Christianity, a crime was committed, the very idea of which raises horror in the most barbarous nations? No, my dear master!" added I, falling on my knees before him, "no, you will not commit an action which would justly incense the whole world against you, and be attended with the most infamous chatisement."

I said a great many things more to dissuade Gaspard from such a guilty undertaking. I don't know where I found all the arguments of a virtuous man, which I used to combat his despair: but certain it is, I spoke like a doctor of Salamanca, though I was but a boy, and no other than the son of Coscolina. Nevertheless, in vain did I represent to him that he ought to reflect seriously, and courageously repel those detestable sentiments which had taken possession of his soul; all my eloquence was ineffectual. He hung his head, and remained in sullen silence; so that I concluded he would not swerve from his resolution, notwithstanding all I could say.

Whereupon I went and demanded a private conversation with my old master; to whom, when we were shut up in a room together, I said, "Suffer me, Sir, to throw myself at your feet, and implore your mercy." So saying, I fell down be-

fore him in great agitation, with my countenance bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at my prostration, and the disorder of my looks, asked what I had done: "A deed," I replied, "of which I now heartily repent, and with which I will upbraid myself as long as I live. I have been weak enough to listen to your son, and to assist him in stealing your money." I then made a sincere confession of all that had passed on that subject: after which I gave him an account of the conversation I had with Gaspard, whose design I revealed, without forgetting the least circumstance.

Bad as his opinion of his son was, old Velasquez could scarce credit my information; the truth of which, however, having no reason to doubt, "Scipio, said he," raising me, for I was still on my knees, "I pardon thee, in consideration of the important notice thou hast given me. Gaspard," added he, raising his voice, "Gaspard has a design upon my life! Ah, ungrateful son! ah, monster! who had better been stifled in the birth, than allowed to live and become a parricide! what cause hast thou to attempt my life? I allow thee a reasonable yearly sum for thy pleasures, and thou art not satisfied. Must I permit thee to squander away my whole fortune?" Having uttered this bitter apostrophe, he laid injunctions upon me to keep the secret, and said he would consider what was to be done in such a delicate conjuncture.

I was very anxious to know what resolution

J. Smith fc. 1 Clements Inn, Strand

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this unfortunate father would take, when that very day he sent for Gaspard, and spoke thus to him, without manifesting a tittle of what he had in his head. "Son, I have received a letter from Merida, importing, that if you choose to marry, you may have a maiden of that place, who is but fifteen years old, perfectly handsome, and mistress of a good fortune; if you have no reluctance to the marriage, we will set out early to-morrow for Merida, visit the lady who is proposed, and if you find her to your liking, you shall espouse her forthwith." Gaspard hearing mention made of a good fortune, which he thought was already in his clutches, answered without hesitation, that he was ready to go: so that next morning at day-break they departed by themselves, mounted on two good mules.

When they had got as far as the mountains of Fesia, into a place as much frequented by robbers as dreaded by travellers, Balthazar alighted, desiring his son to do the same: the young man obeyed, and asked the reason of their quitting their mules in that place. "I will tell thee," answered the old man, darting at him a look in which his grief and indignation were painted; "we have no business at Merida; and the marriage which I mentioned, is only a fable I invented to bring thee hither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son! I am not ignorant of the crime which thou hast hatched; I know that I am to be presented with poison prepared by thee: but, fool that thou art, dost thou flatter

thyself that thou canst deprive me of my life, in that manner, with impunity? Thou art mistaken; thy guilt would soon be discovered, and thou wouldst perish by the hand of the hangman. There is," added he, "a surer method of satiating thy revenge, without exposing thyself to an ignominious death: we are here without witnesses, in a place where murders are committed every day: since thou art so estranged from my blood, plunge thy poniard into my bosom, and the murder will be imputed to robbers." So saying, Balthazar bared his breast, and pointing to his heart, "Here, Gaspard," added he, "strike the mortal blow, and punish me for having given being to such a wretch as thee."

Young Velasquez, thunderstruck at these words, far from seeking to justify himself, fell, without sense or motion, at his father's feet. The good old man seeing him in that condition, which seemed to be the beginning of repentance, could not help yielding to his paternal weakness, and of flying to his assistance: but Gaspard no sooner recovered the use of his reason, than, being unable to bear the presence of a father so justly incensed, he made an effort to get up, mounted his mule, and rode off without speaking a word. Balthazar let him go, and, leaving him to the remorse of his own conscience, returned to Cordova, where, six months after, he learned that his son had thrown himself into the monastery of Carthusians at Seville, there to pass the rest of his days in penitence.

CHAP. XII.

THE CONCLUSION OF SCIPIO'S HISTORY.

BAD example sometimes produces good effects. The conduct of young Velasquez made me reflect seriously upon my own: I began to combat my thievish inclinations, and live like an honest man. The habit of seizing all the money I could lay my hands on, was so much confirmed in me, by repeated acts, that it was not easily vanquished. Nevertheless, I did not despair of succeeding, imagining, that to become virtuous required only a sincere desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to bless my efforts; I no longer beheld the old merchant's strong box with a covetous eye; and I believe that had it been in my power, I should not have touched one of his bags: I own, however, that it would have been very imprudent in him to put my infant integrity to such a proof; and, therefore, Velasquez took care not to do it.

Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, and knight of the order of Alcantara, came frequently to our house; we had his custom, and if he was not the best, he was at least the most noble of those who used the shop. I had the good fortune to please that cavalier, who, every

time he met me, encouraged me to speak, and seemed to listen with pleasure to what I said. "Scipio", said he one day, "if I had a lackey of thy humor, I should think myself in possession of a treasure; and if thou didst not belong to a man for whom I have a regard, I would do my endeavour to debauch thee from his service." "Sir," said I, "you would find it a very easy task: for I have an inclination to serve people of quality, that is my foible, I am charmed by their easy behaviour." "If that be the case," replied Don Manriquez, "I will desire Signior Balthazar to consent to thy leaving him and coming into my service; I don't believe he will refuse me that favor." Indeed, Velasquez granted it the more easily, as he did not think the loss of a roguish lackey irreparable: for my own part, I was glad of the change; the valet of a citizen appearing to me a mere beggar in comparison to the lackey of a knight of Alcantara.

To draw a faithful picture of my new patron, I must tell you that he was a cavalier endowed with a most amiable person, and with such sweetness of temper and cultivated understanding as captivated every body who knew him; besides, he had a great deal of courage and probity, and wanted nothing but fortune: being cadet of a family more illustrious than rich, he was obliged to subsist at the expense of an old aunt who lived at Toledo, and who, loving him as her own son, took care to furnish him with what money he wanted;

he went always handsomely dressed, and was perfectly well received every where. He visited the principal ladies of the city, and among others, the Marchioness of Almenara, a widow of seventy-two years of age; who, by her engaging behaviour and agreeable wit, allured the whole nobility of Cordova to her house. Men as well as women delighted in her conversation, and her family was styled *the polite company*.

My master, who was one of the most assiduous visitors of that lady, came home from her house one evening with an enlivened look, that was not natural to him: upon which, I said, "Signior, you seem to be strangely elevated: may your faithful servant ask the cause? hath not something extraordinary happened?" The knight smiled at that question, and owned he was actually engrossed by a serious conversation which he had enjoyed with the Marchioness of Almenara. "I heartily wish," said I, laughing, "that the superannuated toast may have made a declaration of love to you." "Jesting apart," answered he, "know, my friend, that I am really beloved by the marchioness. 'Chevalier,' said she to me, 'I know the smallness of your fortune, as well as the nobleness of your birth; I have an inclination for you, and am resolved to make you easy in your circumstances, by marrying you, as I cannot decently make your fortune any other way. I know very well that this marriage will bring upon me the ridicule of the world; that scandal will be

very busy at my expense; and that, in short, I shall pass for an old fool, who must needs have another husband. No matter, I intend to despise slander, in order to make you happy: all that I fear,' added she, 'is, that you may possibly have a reluctance to comply with my intentions.' This," continued the knight, "is the subject of her discourse, which surprised me the more, as she is the most virtuous and prudent woman in Cordova; I answered, therefore, I was astonished she should do me the honor of offering me her hand; she who had always persisted in the resolution of preserving her widowhood to the last: to this she replied, that having a considerable estate, she should be glad, in her life-time, to share it with a man of honor, whom she esteemed." "You are then, I suppose," said I, "determined to hazard the leap." "Canst thou doubt it?" he replied. "The marchioness possesses immense wealth, together with excellent qualities both of the heart and head; and I must have lost my judgment indeed, if I rejected such an advantageous settlement."

I very much approved of my master's design to lay hold of this fair occasion to make his fortune, and even advised him to push matters, so much was I afraid to see her inclinations change. Luckily the lady, who had the affair still more at heart than I had, gave such expeditious orders, that the preparations were soon made for her marriage. As soon as it was known at Cordova, that the

old Marchioness of Almenara was going to marry young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began to make themselves merry at the widow's expense: but in vain did they exhaust their stock of raillery, they could not divert her from her design; she let the whole city talk, and followed her knight to the altar: their nuptials were celebrated with such splendour as afforded new matter for scandal. "The bride," said they, "might have at least, for the sake of decency, suppressed all noise and pomp, which but ill becomes old widows who marry young husbands."

The marchioness, instead of appearing ashamed of being, at her age, wife to the chevalier, indulged herself without constraint, in the joy which she felt on this occasion: she had a grand entertainment at her house, accompanied by a concert of music, and the feast ended in a ball, at which were present all the nobility of Cordova. Towards the end of the ball, our new-married couple slipt off, and met in an apartment, where being shut up with a waiting-woman and me, the marchioness addressed herself to my master in these words: "Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house: we will pass the night in separate chambers, and in the day we will live together like mother and son." The knight was, at first, mistaken, and believed that the lady talked thus, only to engage him to offer soft violence to her delicacy; imagining, therefore, that he ought, out of pure politeness, to act

the passionate lover, he approached her, and eagerly endeavoured to serve her in quality of valet de chambre; but she, far from allowing him to undress her, pushed him away with a serious air, saying: "Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those amorous old widows who marry again out of frailty, you are deceived; I did not espouse you to make you buy the advantages which you will reap from our contract of marriage; these are the pure offerings of my heart, and I exact nothing in return but sentiments of friendship." So saying, she left my master and me in our apartment, and retired into her own, with her waiting-maid, absolutely forbidding the chevalier to follow her.

After her retreat, we remained a good while, confounded at what we had heard. "Scipio," said my master, "didst thou ever hear such a discourse as that of the marchioness? What dost thou think of such a lady?" "I think, Sir," answered I, "that she has not her fellow; you are happy in having such a wife, which is like the possession of a benefice without cure of souls." "As for my part," replied Don Manriquez, "I admire a spouse of such an inestimable character, and I intend to compensate, with all imaginable attention, the sacrifice which she makes to her delicacy." Having conversed some time about the lady, we went to rest; I upon a truckle-bed in a wardrobe, and my master in a fine bed prepared for him, where, I believe at bottom, he was

not sorry to lie alone, and to be quit for his fear only.

The rejoicings began again next day, and the new married lady appeared in such good humor as to afford scope to the railers. She was the first to laugh at what they said; nay, even excited others to laugh, by receiving their sallies with a good grace. The knight, for his part, seemed no less satisfied with his spouse; and by the tender glances with which he looked and spoke to her, one would have thought that old age was his taste: this happy couple had in the evening a new conversation, in which it was decided that, without disturbing one another, they should live, for the future, in the same manner as before marriage: meanwhile I must do Don Manriquez the justice to say, that out of consideration for his wife, he did what few husbands would have done in his place: he abandoned a girl in the city, whom he loved, and by whom he was beloved; being resolved, as he said, to maintain no commerce which would seem to insult the delicate conduct of his wife towards him.

While he gave this old lady such strong marks of gratitude, she repaid them with usury, though she was ignorant of this behaviour, and made him master of her strong box, which was even better replenished than that of Velasquez: as she had retrenched her housekeeping during her widowhood, she put it again on the same footing on which it had been in the life-time of her first

husband: she increased the number of her servants, filled her stables with horses and mules; in a word, by her generosity, the chevalier, who was the poorest, became the richest knight of Alcantara. You will ask, perhaps, what I got by all this? I received fifty pistoles from my mistress, and one hundred from my master, who, moreover, made me his secretary, with an appointment of five hundred crowns; he had even so much confidence in my integrity, that he created me his treasurer.

"His treasurer!" cried I, interrupting Scipio with a loud laugh. "Yes, Sir," he replied with a dry serious look, "no less than his treasurer; and I'll venture to say that I acquitted myself in that employment with honor. True it is, I am, perhaps, somewhat indebted for cash; for, as I took my wages per advance, and quitted the knight's service suddenly, it is not impossible that I may now be in arrears: at any rate, it is the last reproach that I have deserved, having always acted with probity since that time.

"I was, therefore," continued the son of Coscolina, "secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who seemed as well satisfied with me as I was with him; when he received a letter from Toledo, importing that his aunt Donna Theodora Moscoso was at the point of death. He set out instantly to see that lady, who had been a mother to him for many years; and I accompanied him in this journey, together with a valet de chambre and one

lackey. Being all mounted on the best horses in our stables, we soon got to Toledo, where we found Donna Theodora in such a condition as gave us hopes that she would not die of that distemper; and truly our prognostic, though contrary to that of an old physician who attended her, was verified by the event.

While the health of our good aunt was re-establishing, less, perhaps, by the remedies she took, than by the presence of her dear nephew, Mr. Treasurer passed his time as agreeably as he could, with young people, whose acquaintance soon introduced him to occasions of spending his money. They sometimes carried me to the tennis-court, where they engaged me in play; and as I was not so expert a gamester as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I conceived insensibly an inclination for play; and if I had entirely abandoned myself to that passion, it would, doubtless, have compelled me to take from our cash some quarters of my allowance per advance; but, luckily, love saved both my own virtue and my master's money. One day, as I passed by the church *de los Reyes*, I perceived, through a lattice, the curtains of which were withdrawn, a young maid, who seemed rather a divinity than a mortal. I would use a term still stronger, if there was any, to denote the impression which she made upon my heart. I made it my business to get information about her, and by dint of inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was

waiting-maid to Donna Julia, second daughter of the Count de Polan.

Beatrice interrupted Scipio with a loud laugh; then addressing herself to my wife, "Beautiful Antonia," said she, "pray look stedfastly on me. Don't you think I have the air of a divinity?" "You had, at that time, in my eyes," said Scipio to her; "and since I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me fairer than ever." My secretary, after such a gallant repartee, pursued his history thus:—

This discovery quite inflamed me: not indeed with a legitimate ardor, for I imagined that I should easily triumph over her virtue, by presents capable of shaking it; but I judged amiss of the chaste Beatrice. In vain did I offer her (by means of mercenary women) my purse and affection: she rejected my proposal with disdain. Her resistance increased my desires. I had recourse to the last expedient, and offered my hand, which she accepted, when she knew that I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As we thought it convenient to conceal our marriage for some time, we were wedded privately, in presence of dame Lorença Sephora, governess of Seraphina, and some other domestics belonging to the Count de Polan. As soon as I had married Beatrice, she facilitated the means of seeing and conversing with her at night in the garden, into which I introduced myself by a little door, of which she gave me the key. Never were man and wife happier in one another than

Beatrice and I. We waited with equal impatience for the hour of rendezvous, ran thither with equal eagerness; and the time which we spent together, though it was sometimes pretty long, seemed but a moment to both.

One night, which was as fatal to me as the others had been propitious, I was surprised at entering the garden, to find the little door open. I was alarmed by this uncommon event, from whence I conceived a bad omen. I grew pale, and trembled as if I had foreseen what was to happen; and advancing in the dark towards an arbor where I used to converse with my wife, I heard the voice of a man. I stopt all of a sudden to listen, and my ear was immediately saluted with these words: "Don't let me languish then, my dear Beatrice! complete my happiness, and consider that your fortune is connected with it." Instead of having patience to hear him to an end, I thought there was no occasion for knowing more. A jealous fury took possession of my soul; and breathing nothing but vengeance, I drew my sword, and went hastily into the arbor. "Ah! cowardly seducer," cried I, "whosoever thou art, thou shalt sooner deprive me of life, than rob me of my honor." So saying, I attacked the cavalier who was talking to Beatrice. He put himself immediately into a posture of defence, and fought like a man who understood the art much better than I, who had only received a few lessons at Cordova. Nevertheless, swordsman as he was, I made a push which he

could not parry, or rather his foot slipt. I saw him fall; and imagining that I had wounded him mortally, fled as fast as my legs could carry me, without answering Beatrice, who called me.

"Yes, really," said his wife, interrupting him, "I called in order to undeceive him. The cavalier, with whom I conversed, was no other than Don Fernand de Leyva. That nobleman, who loved my mistress Julia, had formed a resolution of carrying her off by force, believing it impossible to obtain her by any other means; and I myself had given him a meeting in the garden, to concert with him the steps of that undertaking, on which he assured me my fortune depended: but in vain did I call my husband; he avoided me as a wife that had been unfaithful to him."

"My situation at that time was such," resumed Scipio, "as rendered me capable of committing any thing. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, and to what extravagance it drives the soundest understandings, will not be surprised at the disorder which it produced in my weak brain. I underwent a momentary transition from one extreme to another. I felt the emotions of hatred succeed those of tenderness, which I had entertained for my wife a moment before, and made an oath to abandon and banish her for ever from my memory. Besides, I thought I had killed a cavalier; and in that opinion, being afraid of falling into the hands of justice, suffered that inconceivable anxiety which incessantly pursues, like

a fury, the man who has done a bad action. In this horrible situation, my whole care being to escape, I did not go home, but instantly quitted Toledo, having no other baggage than the clothes on my back. True, indeed, I had in my pocket sixty pistoles,, which were a pretty good resource to a young man who proposed to live all his life in service.

I walked all night long, or rather ran; for the images of alguazils, which continually haunted my imagination, supplied me still with new vigor; and the morning surprised me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I arrived at this last town, finding myself a little fatigued, I went into the church as soon as it was open; and after having put up a short prayer, sat down upon a bench to rest me. I began to muse upon my present situation, which, heaven knows, was perplexing enough; but I had not time to make long reflections. I heard the church echo with two or three smacks of a whip, which making me conclude that a carrier was passing, I got up immediately to see whether or not I was mistaken; and by the time I got to the door, perceived one, who being mounted on a mule, led two more in a leash. "Stop, friend," said I to him; where are these mules going?" "To Madrid," answered he: "I came hither with two good Dominican monks, and am going back myself."

The opportunity that offered of travelling to Madrid, inspired me with an inclination to go thi-

ther. I made a bargain with the carrier, mounted one of his mules, and we pushed forward for Illescas, where we were to sleep. Scarce had we got out of Maqueda, when the carrier, who was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, thundered out church-singing with vast vociferation: he began with the prayers which the canons sing at matins; then sung the *Credo*, as it is sung at high mass; and passing on to vespers, pronounced them, without even sparing the *Magnificat*. Although the rogue stunned me with his noise, I could not help laughing, and even encouraged him to continue, when he was obliged to stop and take breath. "Courage, friend," said I to him, "pray go on; if heaven hath given you good lungs, I see you don't put them to a bad use." "No, indeed," cried he, "I am not, thank God, like the most part of carriers, who sing nothing but infamous or impious songs: I would not even repeat ballads made upon our wars with the Moors; for these are things at least frivolous, if not wicked." "You have," said I, "a purity of heart rarely to be met with among muleteers: with this extreme delicacy in the choice of your songs, have you likewise made a vow of chastity, with regard to the young wenches who live at inns upon the road?" "Certainly," answered he; "continence is another thing on which I pique myself in these sort of places, where I mind nothing but my mules." I was a little astonished to hear this phœnix of carriers talk in such a man-

ner: and looking upon him as a man of honesty and discretion, entered into a conversation with him after he had sung his fill.

We arrived at Illescas in the twilight, where alighting at an inn, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went into the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to prepare a good supper. This he promised to do so effectually, that I should remember I had lodged at his house the longest day I had to live: "Ask," said he, "ask your carrier what sort of a man I am. Ecod! I will defy all the cooks of Madrid and Toledo to make an *olla podrida* comparable to those that I compose. I will treat you this night with a ragout of rabbit dressed in my manner, and you shall see whether or not I have reason to boast of my skill." Thereupon, shewing me a saucepan, wherein there was (as he said) a young rabbit already minced; "There," added he, "is what I intend to give you. When I have once put in some pepper, salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I hope to serve you, in a little time, with a ragout worthy of a judge."

The landlord, after having thus sounded his own praise, began to dress supper; and while it was doing, I went into the hall, where, finding a kind of couch, I lay down to sleep off my fatigue, having had no rest the night before. In two hours, the carrier, awakening me, said, "Master, your supper is ready; come, if you please, and sit

down at table." There was one in another room, with two covers, at which my fellow-traveller and I sitting down, the ragout was served, I attacked it with a greedy appetite, and found it of an exquisite relish; whether hunger made me judge too favorably of it, or that my satisfaction was the effect of the cook's skill. We had also a plate of roast mutton; and I remarking that the carrier did honor to this last dish only, asked why he abstained from the other? He answered, with a smile, that he did not love ragouts. This reply, or rather the smile with which it was accompanied, seemed to me mysterious: "You conceal," said I, "the true reason that hinders you from eating the ragout: pray do me the pleasure of letting me know it." "Since you are so curious to know it," he replied, "I will tell you that I have loathed all these sorts of ragouts, since, in going once from Toledo to Cuença, they brought me for supper at an inn a hashed cat instead of a rabbit, and that gave me a disgust at all fricassees."

The carrier had no sooner spoke these words than, in spite of the hunger that devoured me, my appetite forsook me all of a sudden. I took it in my head that I had eaten of a pretended rabbit, and could no longer look at the ragout without making wry faces. My companion did not cure me of this conjecture, when he told me, that it was a common thing among the innkeepers of Spain, as well as the pastry-cooks, to substitute

that *quid pro quo.* This discourse, you see, was very consoling, and therefore I had not the least inclination to return to the ragout, nor even to touch the roast meat, least the mutton might be as much sophisticated as the rabbit. I rose from table cursing the ragout, the landlord, and his inn; and laying down again upon my settee, passed the rest of the night more quietly than I had expected. Next morning early, after having paid the landlord as handsomely as if I had been extremely well treated, I departed from Illescas, my imagination still so full of the ragout, that I fancied every animal which I saw was a cat.

I arrived in good time at Madrid, where, as soon as I had satisfied my carrier, I hired a small room near the Sun-gate. Mine eyes, though accustomed to quality, were dazzled by the great concourse of noblemen who usually appeared in the court end of the town. I admired the prodigious quantity of coaches, and the infinite number of gentlemen, pages, and lackeys who attended the great. My admiration redoubled, when going to the king's levee, I beheld that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I was charmed at the sight, and said within myself, "I am no longer surprised at what I have heard, that one cannot possibly conceive the magnificence of the court of Madrid, without being an eye-witness of it: I am overjoyed at my coming hither, where I foresee I shall be able to do something." All that I could perform, however, was to contract a few unprofitable acquaintances. I gradually spent all my money, and

thought myself very lucky in having an opportunity of bestowing myself, with all my merit, upon a pedant of Salamanca, whom a family affair had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and with whom I grew acquainted by accident. I became his *fac totum;* and when he returned to the university followed him thither.

The name of my new patron was Don Ignacio de Ipigna; he assumed the Don because he had been preceptor to a Duke, who, by way of recompense, settled upon him a pension for life; enjoyed another as *emeritus* professor of the college; and he drew yearly from the public a revenue of two or three hundred pistoles, by the books of dogmatical morality which he printed. The manner in which he composed his works well deserves honorable mention. He spent almost all the day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing upon small squares of paper each apophthegm or brilliant thought which he met with. As these squares were filled, he employed me to string them upon wire, in form of a garland, and each garland made a volume. What a world of bad books did we compose! every month almost we finished two volumes, and immediately the press groaned with them. What was most surprising, he published these his compilings as performances entirely new; and if the critics thought proper to upbraid him with having pillaged the ancients, he would answer with most haughty assurance, *Furto lætamur in ipso.*

He was also a great commentator; and there

was so much erudition in his annotations, that he frequently made remarks on things scarce worthy to be observed; and sometimes wrote upon his paper squares, passages from Hesiod and other authors, very little to the purpose. That I improved my understanding in the service of this virtuoso, it would be ungrateful in me to deny. I brought my hand-writing to perfection, by dint of transcribing his works: and as in treating me like a pupil, rather than a valet, he took care to cultivate my capacity: he was also far from neglecting my morals. "Scipio," he would say, when he heard of any piece of knavery committed by a servant, "beware, my child, of following the bad example of that rogue; a valet ought to serve his master with equal fidelity and zeal." In a word, Don Ignacio lost no occasion of inculcating virtue in me; and his exhortations had such good effect, that I was never in the least tempted to play him a trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his house.

I have already observed that Doctor de Ipigna was originally of Madrid, where he had a kinswoman called Catalina, chambermaid to the prince's nurse. This waiting-maid, who is the same whom I since made use of to procure Signior de Santillane's enlargement from the tower of Segovia, being desirous of doing a good office for Don Ignacio, engaged her mistress to ask a benefice for him from the Duke of Lerma. That minister granted him a nomination to the archdeaconry of Granada,

which, being a conquered country, is in the gift of the king. We set out for Madrid, as soon as we learned this piece of news, the doctor intending to thank his benefactress before he departed to Granada. I had more than one opportunity of seeing and speaking to Catalina, who was pleased with my easy air and gay disposition. For my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help making suitable returns to the little marks of friendship which she bestowed upon me. In fine, we contracted a mutual attachment. Forgive this confession, my dear Beatrice; as I believed you false, that mistake ought to screen me from your reproaches.

Meanwhile, Doctor Don Ignacio preparing for his departure to Granada, his relation and I, frightened at the separation that threatened us, had recourse to an expedient which preserved us from that misfortune. I feigned myself sick, complained of my head and breast, and affected all the symptoms of the most violent distemper. My master called a physician, who, having examined me with care, sincerely owned that my distemper was a very serious matter; and that in all likelihood I should keep my chamber a long time.

The doctor, impatient to be at his cathedral, did not think proper to delay his departure, but took another young man into his service, leaving me to the care of a nurse, with whom he deposited a sum of money, to defray the expense of my funeral if I should die, or to recompense my service

if I should recover of my disease. As soon as I understood that Don Ignacio was gone, all my complaints vanished. I got out of bed, dismissed my physician who had so much penetration, and got rid of my nurse, who stole more than half of the money with which she had been intrusted in my behalf. While I acted this part, Catalina performed another with her mistress, Donna Anna de Guevara, whom, by persuading her that I was admirable in intrigues, she induced to choose me for one of her agents. Madam nurse, whom her avarice always stimulated to new undertakings, having occasion for such people, received me into her family, and in a little time put my abilities to the preof. She gave me commissions which required some address; and, without vanity, I did not acquit myself amiss: wherefore she was as well pleased with me as I had cause to be dissatisfied with her. This lady was so covetous that she would not allow me the least share of the fruits which she reaped from my industry and trouble. She imagined that she acted with great generosity in paying my wages punctually. This excess of avarice would have soon induced me to quit her service, had I not been retained by the affection of Catalina, which kindling every day more and more, she proposed, in a formal manner, that I should take her to wife.

"Softly, my dear," said I, "that ceremony cannot be performed between us so soon. I must first be convinced of the death of a young woman

who got the start of you, and to whom (for my sins) I am married." "Not you, indeed," replied Catalina; "you only say so to conceal, in a polite manner, the reluctance you have to wed me." In vain did I protest that I spoke the truth. She looked upon my sincere confession as a shift, and being offended at it, changed her behaviour towards me. We did not quarrel, but our correspondence visibly cooled, and we no longer retained for one another any other sentiments than those of decency and common regard.

At this juncture I heard that Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the prime minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a lackey: and this place flattered me the more, as it was represented the most agreeable one that I could possess. "Signior de Santillane," said people to me, "is a person beloved by the Duke of Lerma, and of consequence cannot fail of pushing his fortune a great way: besides, he is very generous; so that, in managing his affairs, you will effectually improve your own." I did not neglect this opportunity. I went immediately, and presented myself to Signior Gil Blas, for whom, at first sight, I felt a growing inclination, and who admitted me into his service on account of my physiognomy. I did not hesitate in quitting the nurse for him; and, if it please heaven, he shall be my last master.

Here Scipio finished his history; then addressing himself to me, "Signior de Santillane," said he, "pray witness for me to these ladies that you

have always found me a zealous and faithful servant. I have need of your testimony to persuade them, that the son of Coscolina has purged his morals, and that virtuous sentiments have succeeded his vicious inclination."

"Yes, ladies," said I, "this is what I can answer for: if Scipio in his childhood was a real *picaro*, he has corrected his conduct so well since that time, that he is now the model of a perfect servant. Far from having cause to blame his behaviour towards me, I must own that I lie under great obligations to him. The night on which I was apprehended to be carried to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage, and secured a part of my effects, which he might have appropriated to himself with impunity. He not only preserved my money, but also, through pure friendship, came and shut himself up with me in prison, preferring the melancholy pleasure of sharing my sorrows to all the charms of liberty."

BOOK XI.

CHAP. I.

GIL BLAS IS OVERWHELMED WITH JOY, WHICH IS DISTURBED BY A MELANCHOLY EVENT. SUCH CHANGES HAPPEN AT COURT AS INDUCE SANTILLANE TO GO THITHER AGAIN.

I HAVE already observed, that there was great harmony between Antonia and Beatrice; the last being used to live like a submissive waiting-woman, and the other habituating herself to act the mistress. Scipio and I were husbands of too much gallantry, and too well beloved by our wives, to be long without children: they grew pregnant almost at the same time. Beatrice, who was the first delivered, brought into the world a girl; and a few days after Antonia crowned my happiness in bringing forth a boy. I sent my secretary to Valencia with this piece of news for the governor, who came to Lirias with Seraphina, and the Marchioness of Pliego, to stand godmothers to the children, being pleased to add this token of affection to those I had already received. My son, whose godfather and godmother were that nobleman and the marchioness, was christened Alphonso; and my lady governess, willing that I should have

the honor of being doubly her gossip, stood with me for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

Not only the people of my family were rejoiced at the birth of my son; the inhabitants of Lirias likewise celebrated it by feasts, which showed that the whole village partook of their master's pleasure. But, alas! our rejoicings were not of long duration; or rather, they were all of a sudden converted into groans, complaints, and lamentations, by an event which more than twenty years have not been able to make me forget, and which will ever be present to my thoughts: my son died, and his mother, though safely delivered, soon followed him; a violent fever robbed me of my dear wife, fourteen months after we had been married. Let the reader conceive, if possible, the sorrow with which I was seized. I fell into a state of stupid dejection; and felt my loss so much, that I seemed quite insensible. I was in this condition five or six days, during which I would take no sustenance; and had it not been for Scipio, I believe I should either have let myself die of hunger, or have lost my reason entirely; but that dextrous secretary found means to beguile my grief, by conforming himself to it: he made me swallow broths, by the art of presenting them with such a mortified look, as if he gave them not so much with view of preserving my life, as of nursing my affliction.

This affectionate servant having written to Don Alphonso an account of my misfortune, and the

deplorable situation in which I was, that tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, repaired immediately to Lirias. I cannot, without being melted, recal the moment in which he presented himself to my view: "My dear Santillane!" said he, embracing me, "I am not come hither to console you; I am come to mourn with you, for Antonia, as you would mourn with me, had fate robbed me of my Seraphina." In effect he shed tears, and mingled his sighs with mine: so that, overwhelmed as I was with sorrow, I had a lively sense of Don Alphonso's goodness.

The governor having had a long conference with Scipio, about the means of vanquishing my grief, they concluded that I must, for some time, be removed from Lirias, where every thing recalled incessantly to my mind the image of my poor Antonia; upon this Don Cæsar's son proposed to carry me with him to Valencia, and my secretary seconded him so well, that I yielded to his proposal. I left Scipio and his wife at my house, every part of which, indeed, served only to increase my affliction, and set out with the governor. When I arrived at Valencia, Don Cæsar and his daughter-in-law spared nothing to divert my chagrin; they entertained me by turns, with all the amusements that seemed proper to dispel it; but in spite of all their endeavours, I continued, as much as ever, plunged in the most profound melancholy. It was not Scipio's fault that I did not resume my tranquillity: he came often from Lirias

to Valencia, to know how I was, and returned sad or gay, as he perceived me more or less disposed to receive consolation.

One morning, entering my chamber, "Sir," said he, with great emotion, "there is a report in the city, which interests the whole kingdom; it is said that Philip the Third is no more, and that the prince his son is now upon the throne; nay more," added he, "that the Cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost his post, that he is even forbid the court, and that Don Gaspard de Guzman,* Count d'Olivares, is now prime minister." I felt myself agitated by this piece of news, without knowing wherefore; and Scipio perceiving it, asked if I was any how affected by this great change? "Why should it affect me, my child?" said I; "I have quitted the court, and ought to look with indifference upon all the changes that can happen there."

"For a man of your age," replied the son of Coscolina, "you are very much detached from the world; were I in your place I should have a longing desire to go to Madrid, and show my face to the young monarch, to see if he would remember me; this is a pleasure in which I would indulge

* Don Gaspard de Guzman, Duke of St. Lucar de Barameda, and Count de Olivares, upon the death of Philip the Third, and disgrace of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, became prime minister to Philip the Fourth, and enjoyed, at one time, the posts of great chamberlain, high chancellor of the Indies, treasurer-general of Arragon, supreme counsellor of state, chief master of the horse, captain-general of the whole Spanish cavalry, and governor of Guipuscoa.

myself." "I understand thee," said I; "thou wouldst have me return to court, to try fortune anew, or rather to grow ambitious and covetous again." "Why should your morals be corrupted?" answered Scipio; "have more confidence in your own virtue; I will answer for your conduct; the wholesome reflections which you made upon the court, during your disgrace, will screen you from the perils of it; re-embark boldly upon the sea, the shelves of which you are so well acquainted with." "Peace, flatterer!" said I, interrupting him with a smile; "art thou tired of seeing me lead a quiet life? I thought thou hadst a greater regard for my repose."

In this part of our conversation, Don Cæsar and his son coming in, confirmed the news of the king's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune; they moreover told me, that this minister having asked leave to return to Rome, it was refused, and he was ordered to repair to his marquisate at Denia; then, as if they had been in concert with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid, and present myself to the new king, since I was known to him, and had even done him such service as the great always recompense with pleasure. "As for my part," said Don Alphonso, "I don't doubt but he will be grateful, and that Philip the Fourth will pay the debts of the Prince of Spain." "I am of the same opinion," said Don Cæsar, "and look upon Santillane's journey to court as an occasion for him to arrive at great preferment."

"Truly, gentlemen," cried I, "you don't consider what you say; to hear you, one would think I had nothing to do but repair to Madrid, in order to have the golden key, or some government conferred upon me; you are mistaken; I am, on the contrary, persuaded that the king would take no notice of my person, were I to present myself to his view: I will do it, if you desire, in order to disabuse you." The noblemen of Leyva took me at my word, and I could not help promising that I would immediately set out for Madrid. As soon as my secretary saw me determined on the journey, he felt an immoderate joy: he imagined that I should no sooner appear before the new monarch, than that prince would distinguish me in the crowd, and load me with honors and wealth: thereupon feeding his fancy with the most splendid chimeras, he raised me to the first offices of the state, and preferred himself by the help of my elevation.

I got ready, therefore, to return to court, not with a view of sacrificing again to fortune, but to satisfy Don Cæsar and his son, who imagined that I should soon possess the favor of my sovereign. True it is, I myself felt at bottom some desire of trying if the young prince would know me again: attracted by this emotion of curiosity, without hope or design of reaping any advantage from the new reign, I departed with Scipio for Madrid, leaving the care of my house to Beatrice, who was an excellent economist.

CHAP. II.

GIL BLAS ARRIVES AT MADRID, AND APPEARS AT COURT; THE KING REMEMBERS AND RECOMMENDS HIM TO HIS PRIME MINISTER. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THAT RECOMMENDATION.

We gained Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having accommodated us with two of his best horses, that we might make the greater dispatch; and we alighted at a furnished house, where I lodged before, belonging to Vincent Forrero, my old landlord, who was very glad to see me again.

As this was a man who piqued himself upon knowing every thing that happened, both at court and city, I asked if there was any thing new." "A great many things," answered he. "Since the death of Philip the Third, the friends and partizans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have bestirred themselves to maintain his eminency in the ministry; but their efforts have been ineffectual; the Count d'Olivares has got the better of them all. It is said that Spain loses nothing by the change, and that the new prime minister has a genius of such vast extent, that he is able to govern the whole world: Heaven preserve him! What is certain," added he, "is, that the people have conceived the highest opinion of his capacity; and we shall see, in the end, whether the Duke of

Lerma is well or ill replaced." Forrero having thus opened, gave me an account of all the changes which had been made at court, since the Count d'Olivares steered the helm of the monarchy.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I went to court in the afternoon, and put myself in the king's way as he went into his closet; but he did not look at me. I returned next day to the same place, but was not more fortunate. The third time, he cast his eyes upon me as he passed, but seemed to take no notice of my person; whereupon I came to a determination, and said to Scipio, who accompanied me, "Thou seest that the king does not remember me; or, if he does, has no mind to renew the acquaintance: I believe it will not be amiss for us to set out upon our return to Valencia." "Not so fast, Sir," replied my secretary; "you know better than I, that success at court is only to be obtained by patience: don't cease showing yourself to the prince: by dint of perseverance in appearing before him, you will oblige him to consider you more attentively, and to recal the features of his agent with the fair Catalina."

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I had the complaisance to continue the same conduct during three weeks; and one day, at length, the monarch, struck with my appearance, ordered me to be called in; and I entered his closet not without great disorder, to find myself *tête-à-tête* with my sovereign. "Who are you?" said he; "I remember your face, but cannot recollect where

I have seen you." "Sir," answered I, trembling, "I had the honor to conduct your majesty, one night, with the Count de Lemos, to the house of——" "Oh! I remember it," said the prince, interrupting me, "you were secretary to the Duke of Lerma, and, if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillane. I have not forgot that you served me with abundance of zeal on the occasion, and that you was very ill rewarded for your pains: was not you imprisoned for that adventure?" "Yes, Sir," said I, "I was six months in the tower of Segovia, from whence your goodness delivered me." "That," answered he, "does not acquit me of the obligation; it is not enough to set you at liberty, I ought to recompense you for the misfortune which you suffered for love of me."

Just as the prince had pronounced these words, the Count d'Olivares entered the closet. A favorite takes umbrage at every thing: he was astonished to find a stranger there; and the king redoubled his surprise, in saying to him, "Count, I recommend this young man to you; employ him in some shape or other, and take care of his advancement." The minister affected to receive this order with a gracious look, eyeing me from head to foot, and very anxious to know who I was. "Go, friend!" said the monarch to me, making a sign for me to retire; "the count will not fail to employ you in an advantageous manner, both for my service, and your own interest."

I immediately quitted the closet, and rejoined

the son of Coscolina, who, extremely impatient to know what the king had said to me, remained in the utmost agitation. He asked me forthwith, whether we must return to Valencia, or stay at court?" "Thou shalt judge," said I: then I overwhelmed him with joy, in recounting to him, word for word, the short conversation which I had with the king. "My dear master," said Scipio to me, when he heard it, "will you distrust my almanacks again? Confess that the lords of Leyva and I were not to blame in exhorting you to take a trip to Madrid. I already see you in some eminent post: you will become the Calderona of Count d'Olivares." "That is not at all what I wish," said I, interrupting him; "I have no ambition for a place which is environed with so many precipices. I would rather have an employment in which I should have no occasion to do injustice, or carry on a shameful traffic of my prince's favors: after the use I made of my past credit, I cannot be too much upon my guard against avarice and ambition." "Come, Sir," replied my secretary, "the minister will give you some good post, which you may fill without ceasing to be an honest man."

More urged by Scipio than by my own curiosity, I went next day to the house of Count d'Olivares, before sun-rise, having been informed that every morning, in summer and winter, he gave audience by candle-light. I modestly took my station in the corner of the hall, from whence I narrowly observed the count when he appeared;

for I had but a superficial view of him in the king's closet: he was taller than the middle size, and might have passed for a fat man in a country where we see none almost but lean people: his shoulders were so high, that I thought him hunch-backed, though he was not so: his head, which was extremely large, hung down upon his breast; his hair was black and straight, his visage long, his complexion of an olive color, his mouth sunk in, and his chin peaked and turned upwards at the end.*

All this together could not make a very handsome appearance; nevertheless, as I believed him to be well disposed towards me, I looked upon him with a favorable eye, and even found him agreeable. True it is, he treated every body with an affable and pleasant air, and very graciously received the memorials which were presented to him: and this seemed to supply the place of a good person. Meanwhile, when I advanced in my turn to salute him, and make myself known, he darted a rude and threatening look at me; then turning his back, without deigning to hear me, returned into his closet. I now thought him more ugly than he was naturally, went out of the hall very much confounded at such an unfavorable reception, and did not know what to think of the matter.

Having rejoined Scipio, who waited for me at

* It was probably on account of this disadvantageous figure that he commonly gave audience from his coach, or received people sitting.

the door, "Dost thou know," said I, "what reception I have met with?" "No," answered he, but it is not difficult to guess: the minister, ready to conform himself to the pleasure of his prince, has doubtless offered you some considerable employment." "There you are mistaken," I replied, telling him, at the same time, in what manner I had been received. Having listened attentively, he said, "The count must have forgotten you, or mistaken you for somebody else: I advise you to wait on him again, and I am sure he will treat you with another sort of look." I followed my secretary's advice, and presented myself the second time before the minister, who treated me still worse than the first, frowned at me, as if the sight of me had given him pain, turned his eyes another way, and retired without speaking one word.

I was touched to the quick by his behaviour, and tempted to depart immediately for Valencia: but this Scipio did not fail to oppose; being unwilling to renounce the hopes which he had conceived. "Dost thou not see," said I to him "that the count wants to remove me from court? The king has expressed to him some regard for me, and that is sufficient to bring upon me the aversion of his favorite; let us yield, my child, let us yield with a good grace to the power of such a formidable foe." "Sir," answered he, incensed against the Count d'Olivares, "I would not so easily quit my ground; I would go and complain to his Majesty, of the little regard which the minister

shows to his recommendation." "Bad counsel, my friend," said I; "if I should take that imprudent step, I would soon repent it; nay, I believe I run some risk in tarrying in this city."

My secretary began to weigh these words, and considering that we had actually to do with a man who might make us visit the tower of Segovia, he partook of my fear, and no longer opposed my desire of quitting Madrid, from whence I resolved to move the very next day.

CHAP. III.

GIL BLAS IS HINDERED FROM EXECUTING HIS RESOLUTION TO LEAVE THE COURT, AND RECEIVES AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF SERVICE FROM JOSEPH NAVARRO.

On my return to my lodging I met my old friend Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga. I went up to him, saluted him, and asked if he knew me, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. "You confess then," said he, "that you have not used me extremely well?" "Yes," answered I; "and you have a right to load me with reproaches: I deserve them all, if I have not already expiated my crime by the remorse which attended it." "Since you have repented of your fault," replied Navarro, embracing me, "I ought no longer to remember it." I, on my part, hugged Joseph in my arms; and we resumed our former sentiments for each other.

He had heard of my imprisonment, and the disorder of my affairs, but was ignorant of what followed. I informed him of all, and even recounted to him the conversation I had with the king; not concealing the bad reception I had met with from the minister, no more than my design of retiring again to my solitude. "Beware of going thither," said he, "since our monarch has

expressed a friendship for you: it must certainly be of some service. Between you and me, the Count d'Olivares has a very singular disposition, and is full of whims: he sometimes, as on this occasion, acts in a very unaccountable manner; and nobody but himself has the key of his irregular behaviour. Finally, whatever reasons he may have for receiving you in this manner, stick close to the business; he will not hinder you from profiting by the prince's bounty; this is what I assure you: I will mention it this evening to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga, my master, who is uncle to the Count d'Olivares, and shares with him the cares of government." Navarro having told me this, asked a direction to my lodging: and so we parted.

It was not long before I saw him again. Coming to me next day, "Signior de Santillane," said he, "you have a protector in my master, who will favor you with his support. On account of the good character which I gave of you, he has promised to speak in your behalf to his nephew the Count d'Olivares, whom I hope he will prepossess in your favor." My friend Navarro, who did not serve me by halves, introduced me two days after to Don Balthazar,* who said to me, with a courteous look, "Signior de Santillane, your friend Joseph has spoke so well of you as to engage me in your interests." I made a profound bow to

* Don Balthazar de Zuniga, Count de Monterez, was great commander of Leon, governor to Philip the Fourth, King of Spain, ambassador at Rome and Vienna, and president of the Italic Council.

Signior de Zuniga, and answered, that I should all my life have a lively sense of the obligation I lay under to Navarro, for having procured for me the protection of a minister who was justly styled *the light of the council.* Don Balthazar, at this flattering reply, clapt me on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, "You may go again to-morrow to the levee of the Count d'Olivares, with whom you will be better satisfied than before."

I appeared, therefore, the third time, before the prime minister; who, having distinguished me in the crowd, honored me with a smiling look, from whence I conceived a good omen. "This goes well," said I to myself: "the uncle has made the nephew hear reason." I now expected a favorable reception; and my expectation was fulfilled: the count, after having given audience to every body, sent for me to his closet, where he said to me with a familiar air, "Friend Santillane, forgive me for having thrown thee into perplexity for my diversion; I pleased myself with giving thee uneasiness, in order to try thy prudence, and see what thou wouldst do in thy chagrin. I don't doubt that thou thoughtest I was displeased with thee; but, on the contrary, my child, I own I have a liking to thy person. Though the king, my master, had not ordered me to take care of thy fortune, I should have done it through pure inclination. Besides, my uncle Don Balthazar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has desired me to look upon thee as one for whom he interests himself: this is

enough to determine me in thy favor." This declaration made such a strong impression upon my senses, that they were quite disordered. I threw myself at the feet of the minister, who having bid me rise, went on in this manner: "Come hither again this afternoon, and call for my steward, who will impart to thee the orders I shall give him." So saying, his excellency went out to hear mass, as he usually did every day after having given audience; and then repaired to the king's levee.

CHAP. IV.

GIL BLAS ACQUIRES THE LOVE OF COUNT D'OLIVARES.

I DID not fail to return in the afternoon, and call for the steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. I no sooner told him my name, than, saluting me with great demonstrations of respect, "Signior," said he, "follow me, if you please: I will conduct you to the apartment which is destined for you in this house." So saying, he carried me by a little stair to a range of five or six rooms, which composed the second story of one wing of the house, and which were very plainly furnished. "This," said he, "is the lodging which his grace appoints for you; and here you will have a table with six covers, maintained at his expense. You will be served by his own domestics, and there will always be a coach at your command. This is not all," added he; "his excellency has ordered me to treat you with the same respect as if you was of the family of Guzman." "What the deuce is the meaning of all this?" said I to myself. "How am I to understand these distinctions? is there not some mischief at bottom? and is it not for his diversion that the minister gives me such honorable treatment?" While I was in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came and told me that the count wanted me. I went instantly to his grace, who being alone in his

closet, "Well, Santillane," said he, "art thou satisfied with thy apartment, and the orders which I have given to Don Raymond!" "The goodness of your excellency," answered I, "seems to be excessive: and I receive it with fear and trembling." "For what reason?" said he; "can I do too much honor to a man whom the king has recommended to my care? No, indeed: I do no more than my duty in treating thee in an honorable manner: be not therefore surprised at what I do for thee; and be assured, that a solid and splendid fortune cannot escape thee, provided thou art as much attached to me as thou wast to the Duke of Lerma. But with regard to that nobleman," added he, "I have been told that you lived in great familiarity with him. I am curious to know how you two became acquainted, and what employment you exercised under that minister: disguise nothing; I insist upon hearing the whole truth." I then remembered my perplexity with the Duke of Lerma, in the same case, and in what manner I extricated myself: and this I practised again very successfully; that is to say, in my narration I softened the rough places, and passed slightly over those places which did not much redound to my honor: I likewise spared the Duke of Lerma; though in doing otherwise I should have better pleased my hearer. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderona,* I gave him no quarter,

* Rodrigo de Calderona, after having been page to the Vice Chancellor of Arragon, entered into the service of the Duke of Lerma, and by the interest and favor of that minister, which he engrossed in a

but disclosed all the fine strokes which I knew he struck in the traffic of commanderies, governments, and benefices.

"What you tell me of Calderona," said the minister, interrupting me, "is conformable to several memorials which have been presented against him, and which contain heads of accusation still more important. His trial will soon come on; and if you wish his downfall, I believe your desire will be satisfied." "I don't desire his death," said I; "though it was not his fault that I found not

very particular manner, obtained very considerable offices. He was first of all made gentleman of the bed-chamber to the king, then secretary of state: some time after, he received the collar of the order of St. Jago, was made commander of Arcana, and created captain of the German guard. Such extraordinary favor he could not bear with moderation, but becoming extremely insolent and licentious, despised the most powerful grandees of Spain, to whose hatred he fell a sacrifice, after the disgrace of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma. He was arrested in the year 1619, and tried on an impeachment containing 250 articles; among which were sorcery and poisoning the queen; though these two were not proved, yet he was condemned to lose his head; and being allowed to dispose of, by will, no more than two thousand ducats of all his immense wealth, was ordered to prepare for death. He was afterwards deprived of the ensigns of knighthood, and conducted to the place of execution, dressed in a cassock mourning cloak, with a caul of frize, and a cross upon his breast. His body, with two torches on each side of it, was guarded on the scaffold by a party of the patrol till the evening, when a great number of priests being assembled to honor his remains, they were dismissed and forbid to accompany the corpse, which was carried without any pomp to the church of the Carmelites, according to his own desire. His head was severed by a stroke upon the throat; because in Spain none but traitors receive it on the neck behind: and he died with such courage and decency, as affected even his enemies with sorrow and remorse.

mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my being imprisoned for a good many months." "How!" cried his excellency; "was Don Rodrigo the cause of thy imprisonment? this is what I did not know. Don Balthazar, to whom Navarro recounted thy history, told me that the late king ordered thee to be confined, as a punishment for having carried the Prince of Spain to a suspected place in the night; but I knew no more of the matter; and I can't conceive what part Calderona could play in the piece." "The part of a lover who revenges an injury received," answered I. I then told him the whole adventure, which he thought so diverting, that, grave as he was, he could not help laughing, or rather weeping with mirth. He was infinitely rejoiced with Catalina, sometimes niece, and sometimes grand-daughter, as well as the part which the Duke of Lerma acted in the whole.

When I had finished my narration, the count dismissed me, saying, that he would not fail to find me some employment next day. I ran immediately to the house of Zuniga, to thank Don Balthazar for his good offices, and to tell my friend Joseph how well I was with the prime minister.

CHAP. V.

THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION WHICH GIL BLAS HAD WITH NAVARRO, AND THE FIRST BUSINESS IN WHICH HE WAS EMPLOYED BY THE COUNT D'OLIVARES.

As soon as I saw Joseph, I told him with some agitation, that I had a great many things to communicate: upon which he carried me to a private place; where, after having informed him of what had happened, I asked his opinion of the matter. "My opinion," answered he, "is, that you are in the way of making a vast fortune: every thing smiles upon you; you are agreeable to the prime minister: and another thing which may turn out to your advantage is, that I can do you the same service which you received from my uncle Melchior de la Ronda, when you first entered the family of the Archbishop of Granada. He spared you the trouble of studying the prelate and his principal officers, by disclosing their different characters to you at once: and I will, after his example, make you acquainted with the count, the countess his wife, and Donna Maria de Guzman their only child.

"The minister has a quick penetrating genius, capable of forming grand designs. He sets up for an universal man, because he has a small tincture of every science, and believes himself able to decide

on every thing. He imagines himself a profound lawyer, a great captain, and a most consummate politician. Add to this, he is so intoxicated with his own opinions, that he always follows them rather than those of others, that he may not seem beholden to the understanding of any man. Between you and me, this defect may have strange consequences, from which heaven preserve the monarchy! He shines in the council by a natural eloquence; and he would write as well as he speaks, if, in order to dignify his style, he did not affect expressions which render it stiff and obscure. He is, besides, very whimsical, capricious, and chimerical. So much for his head. As to his heart, he is generous and friendly. He is said to be vindictive: but what Spaniard is otherwise? He is also accused of ingratitude, in being the occasion of exiling the Duke d'Uzeda and the friar Lewis Aliaga; to whom, people say, he had great obligations: but this is pardonable; the desire of being prime minister prevails over every other sentiment.

"Donna Agnez de Zuniga a Valesco, Countess of Olivares," continued Joseph, "is a lady who has no fault that I know, but that of selling her favors at a high price. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who is, without contradiction, this day, the richest match in Spain, she is an accomplished young lady, and the idol of her father: model your behaviour accordingly: be assiduous in making your court to these two ladies, and appear still more devoted

to the Count d'Olivares than you was to the Duke of Lerma before your journey to Segovia; in which case you will certainly become a personage of rank and power.

"I likewise advise you," added he, "to wait upon my master, Don Balthazar, from time to time; though you have no need of him for your advancement, don't neglect him; he has a very good opinion of you at present: preserve his friendship and esteem, which may be of service to you upon some occasion or other." "As the uncle and the nephew," said I, "are both concerned in the ministry, is there no jealousy between the two colleagues?" "On the contrary," answered he, "they live together in the greatest harmony. Had it not been for Don Balthazar, the Count d'Olivares, perhaps, would not have been prime minister: for, in short, after the death of Philip the Third, all the friends and partisans of the house of Sandoval exerted themselves very much; some in favor of the cardinal, and others in behalf of his son; but my master, who was the most subtle among the courtiers, and the count as cunning as he, broke all their measures, and took such effectual steps to secure that place, that their antagonists were quite foiled. The Count d'Olivares, when he became minister, shared the administration with his uncle Don Balthazar, to whom he left the care of foreign affairs, reserving all domestic concerns to himself: so that, by these means, strengthening the ties of friendship which

ought naturally to unite persons of the same blood, these two noblemen, independent of one another, live in such good correspondence as to me seems unalterable."

Such was the conversation I had with Joseph; by whose information I hoped to profit: after which I went to thank Signior de Zuniga for his goodness towards me. He told me very politely that he would seize every occasion of befriending me, and that he was very glad to find me satisfied with his nephew, to whom he assured me he would speak again in my favor; resolving, at least, he said, to convince me that he had my welfare at heart; and that instead of one patron, I had two. It was thus that Don Balthazar, out of friendship for Navarro, interested himself in my behalf.

That very evening I quitted my hired room, to go and lodge at the prime minister's house, where I supped with Scipio in my own apartment. There we were served by the domestics of the family, who, while we ate our victuals with an affected gravity, laughed, perhaps, within themselves, at the respect which they were commanded to show. When the table was uncovered, and they were retired, my secretary, laying aside his constraint, said a thousand diverting things, which his gay disposition and sanguine hopes inspired. As for me, although overjoyed at the brilliant situation in which I saw myself, I felt myself no longer disposed to be dazzled by it: but going to bed, slept soundly, without giving way to the agreeable ideas

with which I might have entertained my fancy; whereas the ambitious Scipio enjoyed little repose, but passed half of the night in hoarding up money for the portion of his daughter Seraphina.

I had scarce got on my clothes next morning, when I was sent for by his grace, who, when I came before him, said to me, "Well, Santillane, let us see a specimen of what thou canst do: thou sayest the Duke of Lerma employed thee in abridging memorials: I have got one which I intend for thy first essay. The subject of it is this; it must be a performance to prepossess the public in favor of my ministry. I have already privately spread a report, that I found affairs in very great disorder: the business therefore is, to expose to the eyes of both court and city, the miserable condition to which the monarchy is reduced. We must, on this subject, draw a picture which will strike the people, and hinder them from regretting the loss of my predecessor. After that, you must extol the measures which I have taken to render his majesty's reign glorious, his dominions flourishing, and his subjects perfectly happy."

His grace having spoke in this manner, gave me a paper, containing the just causes the nation had to complain of the preceding administration, summed up in ten articles; the least of which, I remember, was sufficient to alarm all good Spaniards: then shutting me in a closet adjoining to his own, he left me to work at liberty. I began to compose my memorial as well as I could. I first

of all described the bad condition of the kingdom, the finances exhausted, the royal revenue engrossed by partisans, and the marine entirely ruined. I then demonstrated the faults committed by those who had governed the state under the last reign, and the terrible consequences which might proceed from these faults. In short, I represented the monarchy in danger, and so sharply censured the former minister, that, according to my memorial, the loss of the Duke of Lerma was a great happiness for Spain. To say the truth, though I harboured no resentment against that nobleman, I was not sorry to do him this good office.—Such is the disposition of man!

In fine, after a frightful picture of the misfortunes which threatened Spain, I encouraged the minds of the people, by making them conceive fair hopes of the future. I made the Count d'Olivares speak like a saviour sent from heaven for the salvation of the state; I promised mountains and miracles: in a word, I entered so well into the views of the new minister, that he seemed surprised at my performance; which when he had read to an end, "Santillane," said he, "dost thou know that thou hast composed a morsel worthy of a secretary of state? I am not surprised that the Duke of Lerma employed thy pen; thy style is concise, and even elegant; but I think it is a little too natural." He then pointed out the places which were not to his taste, altering them with his own hand: and I perceived, by his corrections,

that he loved (as Navarro had told me) obscure and far-fetched expressions. Nevertheless, though he was resolved to have nobleness, or rather conceits, in his diction, he preserved two-thirds of my work: and to show how well he was satisfied with my capacity, sent to me, by Don Raymond, three hundred pistoles, as a desert at dinner.

CHAP. VI.

THE USE TO WHICH GIL BLAS PUTS HIS THREE HUNDRED PISTOLES; AND HIS CHARGE TO SCIPIO: WITH THE SUCCESS OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED MEMORIAL.

THIS favor of the minister, furnished Scipio with a new opportunity of congratulating my return to court. "You see," said he, "that fortune has great designs in your favor. Are you now sorry for having quitted your solitude? Long life to the Count d'Olivares! he is quite another sort of a patron than his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, though you was so much attached to him, let you languish several months without giving you one pistole; whereas the count has already bestowed upon you a gratification, which you could not have expected till after long service.

"I wish," added he, "that the Lords of Leyva were witnesses of the happiness which you enjoy, or at least made acquainted with it." "It is time, indeed, for them to know it," answered I, "and I was just going to talk to thee about the matter. I don't doubt that they are extremely impatient to hear from me; but I waited until I should see myself settled in some shape or other, and be able to inform them positively whether or not I should stay at court. Now that I am fixed, thou mayest set out for Valencia when thou wilt, to inform

those noblemen of my present situation, which I look upon as their own work, since it is certain, that had it not been for them I should never have determined upon my journey to Madrid." "My dear master," cried the son of Coscolina, "how happy will they be when I recount to them what has happened to you! would I were already at the gates of Valencia! but I shall be there very soon: Don Alphonso's two horses are ready: I will set out immediately with one of his grace's lackeys; for, besides that I shall be glad of a companion on the road, you know people will be dazzled by the livery of the prime minister."

I could not help laughing at the ridiculous vanity of my secretary; though vainer still, perhaps, than he, I let him do as he desired. "Go," said I, "and return as soon as possible; for I have another commission to give thee: thou must go to the Asturias with money for my mother: I have, through negligence, let the time pass, on which I promised to remit a hundred pistoles to her, and which thou undertook to deliver with thy own hand. These sort of promises from a son ought to be so sacred, that I upbraid myself with my want of punctuality." "Sir," answered Scipio, "in six weeks I will bring you an account of both these commissions; I will converse with the Lords of Leyva, make a tour to your country house, and revisit the city of Oviedo, which I never remember without wishing three-fourths and a half of its inhabitants at the devil." Upon this I counted out

to the son of Coscolina one hundred pistoles for my mother's pension, with a hundred more for himself, that he might agreeably perform the long journey which he had undertaken.

A few days after his departure, the count sent our memorial to the press; and it was no sooner published, than it became the subject of all conversation in Madrid. The people, always friends to novelty, were charmed with the performance; the low ebb of the finances, which was painted in lively colors, incensed them against the Duke of Lerma; and if the strokes of the quill which that minister received were not applauded by every body, at least they met with abundance of approbation.

As for the magnificent promises made by the Count d'Olivares, and, among others, that of defraying the national expense by a prudent economy, without incommoding the subjects, they dazzled the citizens in general, and confirmed them in the grand opinion which they had already entertained of his capacity; so that the whole city echoed with his praise.

That minister, overjoyed to see the accomplishment of his aim, which in that book had been to acquire the public affection, was resolved to deserve it effectually, by a commendable action, which should be serviceable to the king. For this purpose, he had recourse to the invention of the Emperor Galba; that is, to make those who had enriched themselves the Lord knows how, in the administration of the finances, regorge their

wealth. When he had drawn from those leeches the blood which they had sucked, and filled the coffers of the king, he undertook to preserve it, by suppressing all pensions, not even excepting his own, as well as the gratifications that were given out of the king's exchequer. To succeed in this design, which he could not execute without changing the face of government, he employed me in composing a new memorial, the substance and form of which he dictated. He then enjoined me to rise as much as I could above the ordinary simplicity of my style, and give more dignity to my expressions. "Enough, my lord," said I, "your excellency shall have the *splendid* and *sublime* which you desire." I shut myself up in the same closet where I had composed the first, and there went to work, after having invoked the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Granada.

I began by representing, that we could not be too careful in preserving the money which was in the treasury, and which ought to be employed only in the emergencies of the state, as being a sacred fund, reserved on purpose to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I demonstrated to the king, (for the memorial was addressed to him,) that in taking away all the pensions and gratifications with which the revenue was saddled, he should not, for all that, deprive himself of the pleasure of rewarding those subjects who should deserve his favor; since, without touching his treasure, he was in a condition to bestow upon them great

recompenses: that for some he had viceroyalties, governments, orders of knighthood, and military employments; for others, commanderies, and pensions upon them, titles, magistracies; and, in fine, all sorts of benefices for those who are consecrated to the church.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, took me up near three days; and luckily I composed it to the taste of my master; who, finding it written with emphasis, and stuffed with metaphors, loaded me with applause. "I am very well satisfied with this," said he, pointing to the most tumid places; "these are well-stamped expressions. Courage, friend; I foresee that thou wilt be of great service to me:" nevertheless, in spite of the applause of which he was so prodigal, he did not fail to retouch the memorial. He inserted a good deal of his own, and composed a piece of eloquence which charmed the king and the whole court. The city joined its approbation, conceived a happy omen of the future, and flattered itself that the monarchy would resume its ancient lustre under the ministry of such a great man.

His excellency, seeing that this piece did him a great deal of honor, was willing that I should reap some fruit from it, in consideration of my share in the composition: he accordingly bestowed upon me a pension of five hundred crowns, upon the commandery of Castile; which was the more agreeable to me, as it was not wickedly, though easily got.

CHAP. VII.

BY WHAT ACCIDENT, IN WHAT PLACE, AND CONDITION, GIL BLAS FOUND HIS FRIEND FABRICIO; AND THE CONVERSATION THAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM.

NOTHING gave more pleasure to the count, than to know the opinion which the people of Madrid had of his conduct in the ministry. He asked me every day what people said of him; and even maintained spies, who brought him an exact account of what passed in the city. They reported to him every word which they heard; and as he ordered them to be sincere, his self-love suffered sometimes; for the people have an intemperance of tongue which has no respect of persons.

When I perceived that he was pleased with these reports, I employed myself every afternoon in going to public places, and joining conversation with good company. When they spoke of the government, I listened with attention; and if they said any thing that deserved to be retold to his excellency, I did not fail to inform him of it: but it must be observed, that I never reported any thing which was spoken to his prejudice.

One day, as I returned from one of these places, passing by the door of an hospital, I felt an inclination to enter. I walked through two or three wards full of sick people a-bed, and surveyed every

thing around me. Among these unfortunate people, whom I could not behold without compassion, I was struck with the appearance of one, who, I believed, was my old friend and comrade Fabricio. That I might have a more distinct view of him, I approached his bed; and having no longer any reason to doubt that it was the poet Nunnez, stopt a few minutes to consider him, without speaking; while he, recollecting me also, eyed me in the same manner. At length, breaking silence, "Sure," said I, "my eyes deceive me! is this actually Fabricio whom I meet in this place?" "The very same," answered he coldly; "and thou hast no cause to be surprised at it. Since I left thee, I have ever exercised the business of an author: I have composed romances, comedies, all kinds of works of genius. I have run my race, and am now at the hospital."

I could not help laughing at these words, and still more at the serious air with which they were pronounced. "How!" cried I, "has thy muse brought thee to this place? hath she played thee this villainous trick?" "Thou seest it is so," he replied; "this house is the retreat of many a wit. Thou hast done well, my child, to take another road; but methinks thou art no longer at court, and the face of thy affairs is changed: nay, I remember to have heard that thou wast imprisoned by order of the king." "True," said I, "the charming situation in which I was, when we parted, in a little time after was followed by a re-

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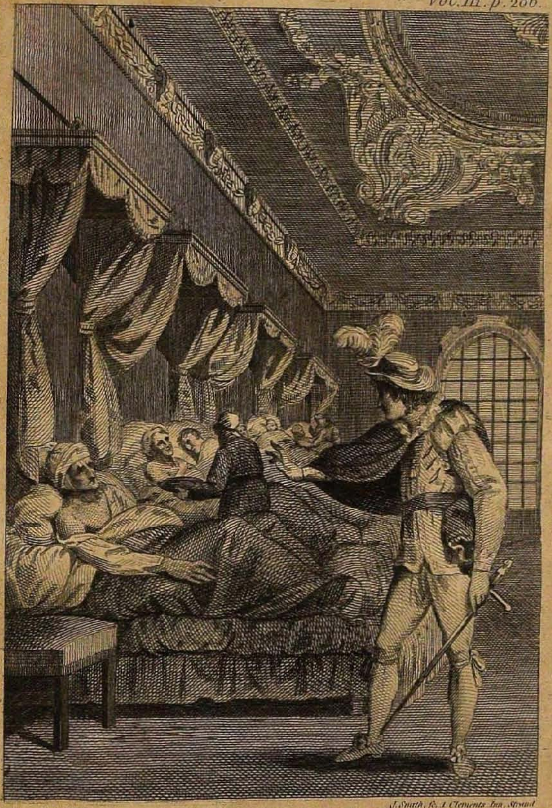

J. Smith, fc. 1 Clements Inn, Strand

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verse of fortune, which robbed me of my wealth and liberty: nevertheless, my friend, thou seest me again in a more flourishing state than ever." "That is impossible!" cried Nunnez; "thy apparel is frugal and plain; and thou hast not that vain and insolent air which prosperity usually gives." "Misfortune," answered I, "hath purified my virtue; and I have learned in the school of adversity to enjoy riches with moderation."

"Tell me, then," cried Fabricio, starting up in a transport, "what may be thy employment? what business dost thou follow? art thou not steward to some ruined grandee, or opulent widow?" "I have a better post," I replied; "but thou must dispense with my telling thee more at present: I will satisfy thy curiosity another time: I will now only let thee know that I am in a condition to assist thee, or rather to make thee easy for life, provided thou wilt promise to write no more works of genius, either in verse or prose. Dost thou feel thyself capable of making such a sacrifice to me?" "I have already made it to heaven," said he, "during a severe distemper of which I am just cured. A Dominican father has made me abjure poetry, as an amusement which if not criminal, at least diverts the mind from the pursuit of wisdom and virtue."

"I congratulate thee, my dear Nunnez," answered I; "but beware of a relapse." "That I am in no fear of," he resumed: "I am firmly resolved to abandon the Muses; and when thou

camest into the ward, was just composing an eternal adieu to them in verse." "Mr. Fabricio," said I, shaking my head, "I don't know if the Dominican and I dare trust to your abjuration, you seem so furiously enchanted by these learned damsels." "No, no," answered he, "I have broke off all connection with them; nay more, I have conceived an aversion for the public, which does not deserve that authors should consecrate their works to it: I should be sorry if I could produce any thing that would please it. Don't imagine," continued he, "that this language is dictated by passion: I speak in cold blood: I equally despise the applause and hisses of the public, which one does not know how to manage: it is so capricious, that it does not think two days one way. What fools are those dramatic writers who are vain of the success of their performances. Whatever noise they make by their novelty, if they are brought upon the stage twenty years after, they are for the most part very ill received. The present generation taxes the past with want of taste, and its determinations are contradicted by those of the next; from whence I conclude, that those authors who are now applauded will be hissed by posterity. It is the same thing with regard to romances, and other amusing books, which, though at first they meet with general approbation, insensibly sink into contempt. That honor, therefore, which we reap from the good success of our works, is nothing but a mere

chimera, an illusion of the brain, a fire of straw which evaporates in smoke."

Though I was well convinced that the Asturian poet spoke this from passion only, I did not seem to perceive it, and said to him, "I am overjoyed to find thee disgusted with the belles lettres, and radically cured of the rage of writing. Be assured that I will immediately procure for thee an employment in which thou mayest enrich thyself, without being at a great expense of genius." "So much the better!" cried he. "Genius stinks in my nostrils, and I now look upon it as the most fatal present that Heaven can bestow upon man." "I wish, my dear Fabricio," I replied, "that thou mayest still preserve those sentiments. If you persist in your resolution to quit poetry, I repeat it, I will soon procure for thee an honourable and lucrative post; but until I can do thee this service," added I, giving him a purse of sixty pistoles, "pray accept of this small token of my friendship."

"O generous friend!" cried the son of barber Nunnez, transported with gratitude and joy, "what thanks do I owe to heaven for bringing thee into this hospital, which I leave this very day by thy assistance!" and he actually ordered himself to be transported into a hired lodging. But before we parted, I told him where I lived, and invited him to come and see me as soon as he should be perfectly recovered. He seemed ex-

tremely surprised, when I told him that I lodged in the house of the Count d'Olivares. "Thrice happy Gil Blas," said he, "whose fate it is to be a minister's favorite! I rejoice at thy good fortune, since thou usest it so well.

CHAP. VIII.

GIL BLAS BECOMES MORE AND MORE BELOVED BY HIS MASTER. SCIPIO RETURNS TO MADRID, AND GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY TO SANTILLANE.

THE Count d'Olivares, whom henceforth I shall call the Count-Duke, because the king was pleased about this time to honor him with that title, had a foible which I discovered, very much to my own advantage: and this was a desire of being beloved. As soon as he perceived that any one attached himself to him through inclination, he immediately conceived a friendship for that adherent.

I took care not to neglect this observation. I was not contented with barely doing what he commanded; I executed his orders with such demonstrations of zeal, as quite won his heart. I studied his taste in all things, that I might conform myself to it; and anticipated his desires as much as I could.

By this conduct, which seldom fails of success, I insensibly became the favorite of my master, who, on his part, as I myself had the same foible, gained my whole soul, by the marks of affection which he bestowed on me; and I insinuated myself so far into his favor, that I at length shared his confidence with Signior Carnero, his chief secretary.

Carnero had practised the same method of being

agreeable to his excellency; and succeeded so well, that he was intrusted with the mysteries of the cabinet. That secretary and I were the two confidants of the prime minister, and the depositories of his secrets; with this difference, that he spoke to Carnero of nothing but state affairs, and conversed with me on his own private concerns only; by these means making as it were two separate departments, with which we were both equally satisfied, we lived together without jealousy, as without friendship. I had cause to be pleased with my situation, which giving me continual opportunities of being with the count-duke, I was always at hand to observe the very bottom of his soul, which he, though naturally dissembling, ceased to conceal from me, when he no longer doubted the sincerity of my attachment.

"Santillane," said he to me one day, "thou hast seen the Duke of Lerma enjoy an authority which looked more like the power of an absolute monarch, than that of a favorite minister: nevertheless, I am still more lucky than he was, even at the highest point of his fortune. He had two formidable enemies in the Duke d'Uzeda his own son, and in the confessor of Philip the Third: Whereas I see not one person near the king who has credit enough to hurt me, nor even one whom I suspect to be my foe."

"It is true, indeed," continued he, "that when I came to the ministry I suffered none to be near the prince, but those who were connected with me,

either by blood or friendship. I have, by vice-royalties or embassies, got rid of all those noblemen who, by their personal merit, might have acquired some portion of my sovereign's favor, which I was resolved entirely to possess; so that I may now safely say, no great man takes umbrage at my credit. Thou seest, Gil Blas," added he, "that I disclose my heart to thee. As I have reason to think thee entirely devoted to me, I have chosen thee for my confidant. Thou dost not want understanding; art (I believe) modest, prudent, and discreet; in a word, thou seemest proper for executing twenty sorts of commissions, which require a young man of extensive understanding, who is at the same time in my interest."

I was not proof against the flattering images which these words raised in my imagination. Some vapours of avarice and ambition mounted into my braiu, and awaked in me those sentiments over which I thought I had gained a complete triumph. I protested to the minister, that I would answer his intentions with all my power; and I kept myself ready to execute, without scruple, all the commissions with which he should think proper to entrust me.

While I was thus disposed to raise new altars to fortune, Scipio returning from his journey, said, "I have not a tedious narration to make. The Lords of Leyva were charmed when I told them the reception you met with from the king when he knew you, and with the behaviour of the Count d'Olivares."

Here I interrupted Scipio, saying, "You would have given them still more pleasure, my friend, could you have told them on what footing I am now with his grace. The rapidity of the progress which I have made in his excellency's heart since thy departure, is altogether prodigious." "God be praised! my dear master," answered he. "I foresee that a splendid destiny awaits us." "Let us wave the subject," said I, "and talk of Oviedo. Thou hast been at the Asturias; in what condition didst thou leave my mother?" "Ah! Sir," he replied, assuming all of a sudden a melancholy look, "I have nothing but afflicting news for you from that quarter." "Oh, heaven!" cried I, "my mother is certainly dead." "Six months ago," said my secretary, "the good lady paid the tribute of nature, as well as your uncle Signior Gil Perez."

I was deeply affected with my mother's death, although in my infancy I had never received from her those caresses which are necessary to make children grateful in the sequel. I likewise paid those tears which I owed to the good canon, for the care he had taken of my education. My grief indeed did not last long, but soon mellowed into a tender remembrance which I have always preserved of my parents.

CHAP. IX.

HOW, AND TO WHOM THE COUNT DUKE MARRIED HIS ONLY DAUGHTER, WITH THE BITTER FRUITS WHICH THAT MARRIAGE PRODUCED.

SOON after the return of Coscolina's son, the count-duke fell into a profound reverie, in which he remained for the space of eight whole days. I imagined that he was meditating some great stroke of politics: but the subject of his musing regarded his own family only. "Gil Blas," said he to me one afternoon, "thou must have perceived that I am a good deal perplexed in mind. Yes, my child, I am wholly engrossed by an affair upon which the repose of my life depends; and I will impart the secret to thee.

"Donna Maria my daughter," continued he, "is now marriageable, and her heart is disputed by a great number of noblemen. The Count de Niebles, eldest son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, chief of the family of Guzman, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis de Carpio and my own sister, are the two candidates who seem best entitled to the preference; especially the last, who possesses merit so much superior to that of his rivals, that all the court persuade themselves I shall make choice of him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into the reasons which I

have to exclude him, as well as the Count de Niebles, I will tell thee, that I have cast my eyes on Don Ramires Nunnez de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, and chief of the family of Guzman d'Abrados; to this young nobleman, and the children which he shall have by my daughter, I intend to leave my whole estate annexed to the title of Count d'Olivares, to which I will join the quality of grandee; so that my grand-children and their descendants, proceeding from the branch d'Abrados and that of Olivares, will pass for the eldest of the Guzman family."

"Well, Santillane," added he "dost thou not approve of my design?" "Pardon me, Sir," answered I, "the project is worthy of the genius that formed it; I am only afraid that the Duke de Medina Sidonia will murmur at it." "Let him murmur, if he pleases," resumed the minister; "I shall give myself very little trouble about that. I don't love his branch, which hath usurped the birth-right and titles thereunto attached, over the house of Abrados. I shall mind his complaints less than the chagrin of my sister the Marchioness of Carpio, in seeing her son disappointed in his expectation of my daughter. But, after all, I intend to please myself; and it is already decided that Don Ramires shall prevail over all his rivals."

The count-duke having taken this resolution, gave a new mark of his singular policy in putting it in practice. He presented a petition to the king, begging that he and the queen would be pleased

to bestow his daughter in marriage, describing the characters of the noblemen who were in pursuit of her, and leaving the choice entirely to their majesties; but he did not fail in speaking of the Marquis of Toral, to shew that he was the most agreeable of them all. Whereupon the king, who had a blind complaisance for his minister, returned this answer; "I believe Don Ramires Nunnez worthy of your daughter Donna Maria; nevertheless take your own choice. The match which will suit you best, will be the most agreeable to me. The King."

The minister affected to shew this answer; and pretending to look upon it as his prince's order, made haste to marry his daughter to the Marquis of Toral; an event that very much displeased the Marchioness de Carpio, as well as the Guzmans, who had flattered themselves with the hope of espousing Donna Maria; nevertheless as they could not hinder the marriage, they affected to celebrate it with great demonstrations of joy. One would have thought the whole family was charmed with the occasion; but the malecontents were soon revenged in a manner very melancholy for the count-duke. Donna Maria* in ten months brought forth a daughter, which died in the birth; and in a few days after fell herself a victim to death. What a loss was this for a father who (to use the expres-

* Mr. Le Sage has here deviated from the true history; for Donna Maria died unmarried, though she was betrothed to Raymond de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, afterwards created Duke of Medina de las Torras.

sion,) had no eyes but for his daughter; and who saw in this event the miscarriage of his design of taking the right of eldership from the branch of Medina Sidonia! He was so much affected, that for some days he shut himself up, and would see nobody but me, who conforming myself to his immoderate grief, seemed as much afflicted as he. To tell the truth, I made use of this occasion to shed fresh tears to the memory of Antonia. The resemblance which her death had to that of the Marchioness of Toral, burst open again the wound which was but imperfectly cured, and renewed my own affliction, so much that the minister, overwhelmed as he was with his own sorrow, could not help being struck with mine. He was astonished to see me enter so warmly into his chagrin. "Gil Blas," said he one day, perceiving me plunged in the most melancholy sadness, "it is a sweet consolation for me to have such a sympathizing confidant." "Ah! my Lord," answered I, giving to him all the honor of my affliction, "I must be very ungrateful and hard-hearted indeed, if I did not sincerely sympathise with your grace. How can I consider that you mourn the loss of a daughter of accomplished merit, whom you tenderly loved, without mingling my tears with yours? No, my Lord, I am so sensible of your goodness, that as long as I live I shall always share in your pain as well as pleasure."

CHAP. X.

GIL BLAS BY ACCIDENT MEETS THE POET NUNNEZ, WHO TELLS HIM THAT HE HAS COMPOSED A TRAGEDY, WHICH IS IMMEDIATELY TO BE REPRESENTED ON THE PRINCE'S THEATRE. THE BAD SUCCESS OF THAT PIECE, WITH THE SURPRISING GOOD LUCK WHICH ATTENDED ITS FALL.

THE minister began to be consoled, and I of consequence to resume my good humor, when one evening I went out all alone to take the air in my coach, and met in my way the Asturian poet, whom I had not seen since he quitted the hospital. He being very well dressed, I took him into the coach, and we drove together to St. Jerome's Meadow.

"Mr. Nunnez," said I to him, "I think myself very lucky in having met you by chance, otherwise I should not have had the pleasure."—"No reproaches, Santillane," said he with precipitation; "I sincerely own that I had no intention to visit thee, and thou shalt hear the reason. You promised me a good post, provided I should abjure poetry; and I have found a very substantial one on condition that I make verse. I have accepted this last, as most suitable to my humor. A friend of mine has introduced me into the family of Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, treasurer of the king's galleys. This Don Bertrand, who wants to have

a wit in his pay, finding my versification very brilliant, has chosen me preferably to five or six authors, who offered themselves candidates for the employment of his private secretary."

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear Fabricio," said I, "for that Don Bertrand is in all appearance very rich." "Rich!" answered he, "they say he has such immense wealth, that he cannot count it. Be that as it will, my office is this: as he piques himself upon being gallant, and would pass for a man of genius, he keeps a literary correspondence with several very sprightly ladies, and I lend him my pen to compose billets filled with wit and humor. I write for him, in verse to one, in prose to another, and sometimes in person carry the letters, to show the multiplicity of my talents."

"But thou hast not told me," said I, "what I chiefly desire to know; art thou well paid for thy epistolary epigrams?" "Very largely," he replied. "Rich people are not always generous, and I know some of them who are mere scrubs; but Don Bertrand uses me very nobly. Over and above two hundred pistoles of fixed wages, I frequently receive from him small gratifications, which put me in a condition to act the gentleman, and pass my time agreeably with some authors, who are, like me, enemies to care." "But," I resumed, "has thy treasurer taste enough to relish the beauties of a work of genius, and to perceive its faults?" "Not at all," answered Nunnez; "though he can talk speciously, he is by no means a connoisseur."

He gives himself out, however, for another *Tarpa*;* decides boldly, and supports his opinion with such loudness and obstinacy, that generally when he disputes, his antagonist is obliged to yield, in order to avoid the shower of ill language with which he is wont to overwhelm his opponents.

"Thou mayst well believe," pursued he, "that I am very cautious of contradicting him, whatever cause he gives me for so doing; for, besides the disagreeable epithets which I should certainly bring upon myself, I might possibly be turned out of doors; I therefore prudently applaud what he praises, and disapprove of every thing which he condemns. By this complaisance, which costs me nothing, because I possess the art of accommodating myself to the characters of those who can befriend me, I have gained the friendship and esteem of my patron. He has engaged me to compose a tragedy on a subject which he suggested. I have accordingly finished it under his eye; and if it succeeds, I shall owe one part of my glory to his good advice."

I asked the title of his tragedy, and he told me it was called *The Count de Saldagne*; informing me at the same time, that it would be represented in three days on the Prince's theatre. "I wish,"

* Sp. Mentius Tarpa, a famous critic of the Augustan age: his tribunal was in the temple of Apollo, where he sat with four colleagues to judge the merit of all theatrical performances before they were exhibited on the stage.

answered I, "that it may have a great run; and I have such a good opinion of thy genius, as to hope it will." "I hope so to," said he; "but there is no dependence upon such hope, so uncertain are authors of the event of a dramatic piece." At length the first day of its representation arrived; and as I could not go to the play, being hindered by a commission I had to perform for his grace, all that I could do was to send Scipio thither, that I might at least know that very evening the success of a performance in which I interested myself. After having waited with impatience, I saw him return with a look from which I conceived a bad omen. "Well," said I, "how hath *The Count de Saldagne* been received by the public?" "Very brutally," answered he; "never was piece more barbarously used. I came away incensed at the insolence of the pit." "And I," said I, "am incensed at the fury of Nunnez in composing plays. Must he not have lost his judgment entirely, to prefer the ignominious shouts and hisses of an audience, to the happy lot which I could have procured for him?" Thus, through friendship, did I inveigh against the Asturian poet, and afflicted myself at the misfortune of his piece, while he exulted in the event.

Two days after he actually came to my house in a transport of joy. "Santillane," cried he, "I am come to share with thee the extreme pleasure which I feel. In composing a bad play, my friend,

I have made my fortune. Thou knowest the strange reception which *The Count de Saldagne* met with; all the spectators exclaimed against him, as if for a wager, and to that general exclamation I owe my good fortune."

Astonished to hear the poet Nunnez talk in that manner, "How! Fabricio," said I, "is it possible that the fall of thy tragedy can justify this thy immoderate joy?" "Yes, sure," answered he; "I told thee before that Don Bertrand had inserted some of his own composition in my piece, which of consequence he thought excellent. He was violently piqued to find the spectators of a different opinion, and this morning said to me, 'Nunnez, *Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni:* if the public is displeased with thy production, in recompense it pleases me, and that is enough. To console thee for the bad taste of the age, I will give thee two thousand crowns a year on my estate; let us go instantly to my notary, and have the deed drawn.' We went thither accordingly; the treasurer has signed the deed, and paid me the first year advance."

I congratulated Fabricio on the unhappy fate of *The Count de Saldagne*, since it had turned out so much to the author's advantage. "Thou hast reason," continued he, "to compliment me on that occasion: how happy am I in having been soundly hissed! If the public had been kind

enough to honor me with applause, what service should I have received from it? Nothing of consequence. I should have got but a very moderate sum for my labours, whereas its hisses have all of a sudden made me easy for life."

CHAP. XI.

SANTILLANE OBTAINS AN EMPLOYMENT FOR SCIPIO, WHO DEPARTS FOR NEW SPAIN.

My secretary could not without envy look upon the unexpected good fortune of the poet Nunnez, which was the sole subject of his discourse during eight whole days. "I admire," said he, "the caprice of Fortune, that sometimes delights in loading a detestable author with wealth, while she leaves men of genius in misery; I wish she would take it in her head to enrich me also in the space of one night." "That may very well happen," said I, "and much sooner than you imagine. Thou art here in her temple; for I think we may call the prime minister's house the temple of Fortune, where favors are often bestowed, which all of a sudden enrich those who obtain them." "That is true, Sir," answered he, but they must be waited for with patience." "Once more, Scipio," said I, "make yourself easy; perhaps you are on the point of having some good post." A few days after, an opportunity actually offered of employing him advantageously in the service of the count-duke, and I did not let it escape.

Discoursing one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, steward of the prime minister, our conversation turned upon his excellency's revenues.

"His grace," said he, "enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, which are worth forty thousand crowns per annum, and he is obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara only. Besides, his three posts of great chamberlain, master of the horse, and grand chancellor of the Indies, bring in two hundred thousand more; and all that is nothing in comparison to the immense sums which he draws from America. I will tell you how: when the king's ships set sail from Seville to Lisbon for that country, he embarks on board of them wine, oil, and corn, which his estate of Olivares affords, and he pays no duty. He sells these commodities in the Indies for four times the price which they would yield in Spain; then employs the money in purchasing spices, colors, and other things, which are bought for almost nothing in that new world, and afterwards are sold for a high rate in Europe. He has already got many millions by this traffic, without doing the least prejudice to the king. What will not surprise you," continued he, "is, that the people employed in transacting this commerce always return enriched, the count allowing them to take care of their own fortune, while they manage his."

Coscolina's son, who listened to our discourse, could not hear Don Raymond talk thus without interrupting him. "Zooks! Signior Caporis, I should be glad to be one of these people, for I have long wished to see Mexico." "Your curiosity will soon be satisfied," said the steward to him, "if

Signior de Santillane has no objection to your desire. Though I am very nice in the choice of those whom I send to the Indies on this employment, (for I choose them all,) I will, without hesitation, insert you in my register, if your master desires it." "You will oblige me in so doing," said I to Don Raymond; "pray give me that mark of your friendship. Scipio is a young man whom I love; besides, he has a great deal of understanding, and will behave in an irreproachable manner. In a word, I can answer for him as for myself."

"If that be the case," resumed Caporis, "let him repair immediately to Seville; the ships will sail for the Indies in a month. He shall have a letter from me at his departure, for a man who will give him all necessary instructions to enrich himself, without prejudicing the interest of his excellency, which must ever be looked upon as sacred."

Scipio, charmed with his employment, made haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns which I gave him to buy wine and oil in Andalusia, and put him in a condition to trade in the Indies on his own bottom. Nevertheless, glad as he was to make a voyage by which he hoped to profit so much, he could not leave me without shedding tears, and I could not behold his departure with indifference.

CHAP. XII.

DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA COMES TO MADRID; THE MOTIVE OF HIS JOURNEY. GIL BLAS IS AFFLICTED AT THE CAUSE, BUT REJOICES AT THE CONSEQUENCE OF IT.

SCIPIO was scarce gone, when a page belonging to the minister brought to me a billet containing these words:—"If Signior de Santillane will give himself the trouble to call at St. Gabriel's head, in Toledo-street, he will there see one of his best friends."—"Who can this anonymous friend be?" said I to myself: "why does he conceal his name? He wants, I suppose, to give me the pleasure of surprise." I went out immediately to Toledo-street, and going to the appointed place, was not a little astonished to see Don Alphonso de Leyva. "Are you here, my lord?" cried I. "Yes, my dear Gil Blas," answered he, hugging me close in his arms; "it is Don Alphonso himself whom you see." "What brings you to Madrid?" said I. "I will both surprise and afflict you," he replied, "in telling the cause of my journey. I am deprived of the government of Valencia, and the prime minister has ordered me to court, to give an account of my conduct." I remained a whole quarter of an hour mute and thunderstruck; then recovering myself, asked what he was accused of? "I know nothing of the matter," answered he,

but impute my disgrace to a visit which I made about three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who has been a month confined to his castle of Denia."

"O! truly," said I, interrupting him, "you have reason to attribute your misfortune to that indiscreet visit; you need seek for the cause of it nowhere else: and give me leave to say, you did not consult your usual prudence when you went to visit the disgraced minister." "The error is now committed," said he, "and I have taken my resolution with a good grace. I will retire with my family to the castle of Leyva, where I will spend the rest of my days in profound peace. All that gives me concern is, my being obliged to appear before a haughty minister, who may possibly treat me uncivilly—a sufficient mortification to a Spaniard! nevertheless, it must be borne; but before I would make this submission I was willing to speak with you."

"My lord," said I, "don't present yourself before the minister, until I know what you are accused of; perhaps the evil is not without remedy. Be that as it will, you must allow me, if you please, to exert myself in your favor, as much as gratitude and friendship require." So saying, I left him at the inn, assuring him that he should hear from me soon.

As I had not meddled in state affairs since the two memorials, of which eloquent mention has been made, I went to Carnero, and asked if it was

true that the government of Valencia had been taken from Don Alphonso de Leyva? he answered in the affirmative, but said he was ignorant of the cause. Upon this I formed a resolution, without hesitation, to address myself to his grace, that I might learn from his own mouth what cause he had to be offended with Don Cæsar's son.

I was so much penetrated with this troublesome event, that I had no occasion to affect a melancholy look to appear afflicted in the eyes of the count-duke. "What is the matter, Santillane?" said he, as soon as he saw me; "I perceive an impression of sorrow on thy countenance, and even the tears ready to drop from thine eyes: has any body injured thee? speak, and thou shalt be revenged." "My lord," answered I, weeping, "I would not conceal my sorrow from you if I could: I am quite in despair, being told that Don Alphonso de Leyva is no longer governor of Valencia; for I could not have heard a piece of news that would affect me more." "What sayest thou, Gil Blas?" replied the minister, astonished; "what concern canst thou have with that Don Alphonso and his government?" I then gave him a detail of all the obligations I lay under to the Lords of Leyva: and afterwards recounted in what manner I had obtained from the Duke of Lerma the government in question for Don Cæsar's son.

When his excellency had heard me to an end, with an attention full of kindness for me, he said, "Dry up thy tears, my friend. I not only was

ignorant of what thou hast told me, but own also that I looked upon Don Alphonso as a creature of the Cardinal of Lerma. Put thyself in my place; would not the visit which he made to his eminence make thee suspect him? I am willing to believe, however, that having received his employment from the cardinal, he took that step out of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his post to thee; but if I have destroyed thy work, I can repair it. I will even do more for thee than the Duke of Lerma did: thy friend Don Alphonso was no more than governor of the city of Valencia, and I will make him viceroy of the kingdom of Aragon: thou mayest go and inform him of this piece of news, and desire him to come and take the oaths."

When I heard these words, I passed from the extremity of grief to an excess of joy, which disturbed my intellects so much, that my disorder appeared in the compliment of thanks which I made to his grace, who was not, however, displeased at my confusion. But when I told him that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he said I might introduce him that very day. I ran immediately to the St. Gabriel, where Don Cæsar's son was overjoyed to hear of his new employment: he could scarce believe what I said, so improbable did it seem to him that the minister, whatever friendship he had for me, was capable of bestowing viceroyalties on my recommendation. I conducted him to the count-duke, who received him

very politely, and told him, "he had behaved so well in his government of the city of Valencia, that the king, thinking him qualified to fill a higher place, had named him to the viceroyalty of Aragon. Besides," added he, "the dignity is not above your birth, and the nobility of Aragon cannot murmur at the choice of the court."

His excellency made no mention of me, and the public never knew the part which I acted in this affair—a circumstance that saved Don Alphonso and the minister a great many satirical remarks, that people might have passed upon a viceroy of my making.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son was certain of the place, he dispatched an express to Valencia to inform his father and Seraphina of his good fortune, and they soon came to Madrid: their first care was to find me, and overwhelm me with thanks. What a moving and glorious sight was it for me, to see myself embraced with eagerness by the three persons in the world whom I loved most! As sensible of my zeal and affection as the honor which the post of viceroy did to their family, their expressions of gratitude to me were infinite; they even spoke to me as to one of their own rank; they seemed to have forgot that I was their servant; and thought they could never enough manifest their friendship. To suppress useless circumstances, Don Alphonso having received his letters patent, thanked the king and his minister, and having taken the usual oaths, set out with his

family from Madrid, to go and fix his abode at Saragossa,* where he made his entrance with all possible magnificence, and the Aragonians showed, by their acclamations, that they were well pleased with the viceroy whom I had set over them.

* Saragossa, formerly Cæsarea Augusta, an ancient city, upon the river Ebro, capital of the kingdom of Aragon. It has an archbishop, sovereign council, and is the seat of an university and inquisition.

CHAP. XIII.

GIL BLAS MEETS DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS, AND DON ANDREA DE TORDESILLAS, AT THE PALACE. THE CONCLUSION OF THE STORY OF DON GASTON AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO. SANTILLANE DOES AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF SERVICE TO TORDESILLAS.

I SWAM in joy for having so luckily changed a displaced governor into a viceroy: even the Lords of Leyva were less pleased at it than I was. I soon had another opportunity of employing my credit for a friend; which I think I should relate, to persuade the reader that I was no longer the same Gil Blas who sold the favors of the court, under the preceding ministry.

Being one day in the king's antichamber discoursing with noblemen, who, knowing my situation with the prime minister, did not disdain my conversation, I perceived in the crowd Don Gaston de Cogollos, that state prisoner whom I had left in the tower of Segovia, and the keeper Don Andrea de Tordesillas along with him. I immediately quitted my company to go and embrace these two friends, whom, if they were astonished to see me there, I was still more so to meet in that place. After some warm hugs on both sides, Don Gaston said to me, "Signior de Santillane, we have a world of questions to ask mutually, and this is not a convenient place for that purpose: allow me to

conduct you to a house where Signior de Tordesillas and I will be glad to have a long conversation with you." I consented to this proposal: we squeezed through the crowd, and going out of the palace, found Don Gaston's coach waiting for us in the street. We went into it all three, and were driven to the great market-place where the bull-fights are performed, and there Cogollos lived in a very handsome house. "Signior Gil Blas," said Don Andrea, when we were set in a hall magnificently furnished, "at your departure from Segovia, you seemed to hate the court, and to be resolved to remove from it for ever." "That was actually my design," answered I; "and so long as the late king lived I did not change my sentiments; but when I understood that the prince his son was on the throne, I was willing to see if the new monarch would know me again: he did recollect me, and I had the good fortune to be favorably received; he himself recommended me to the prime minister, who has conceived a friendship for me, and with whom I am in still greater favor than ever I was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Signior Don Andrea, was what I had to tell you. Now, pray, let me know if you are still keeper of the tower of Segovia?" "No, indeed," he replied, "the count-duke has put another in my place; in all probability, believing me wholly devoted to his predecessor." "And as for me," said Don Gaston, "I was set at liberty for a quite contrary reason. The prime minister no sooner learned that I was imprisoned

at Segovia by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be discharged; it now remains, Signior Gil Blas, to inform you of what has happened to me since I have been discharged.

"The first thing I did," continued he, "after having thanked Don Andrea for his kindness to me, during my confinement, was to repair to Madrid, and present myself before the Count-Duke d'Olivares, who said to me, 'Don't be afraid that the misfortune which hath happened to you will in the least prejudice your reputation: you are now fully justified; and I am the more convinced of your innocence, because the Marquis of Villareal, whose accomplice you were suspected to be, was not guilty; for, though he is a Portuguese, and even related to the Duke of Braganza, he is not so much in his interests as in those of the king my master. Your intimacy with that marquis is therefore no reproach upon you: and in order to repair the injustice which you suffered, in being accused of treason, the king has bestowed upon you a lieutenancy in the Spanish guards.' I accepted the commission, begging that his excellency would allow me, before I should enter upon my duty, to go to Coria and visit my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. The minister gave me leave for a month, and I set out accompanied by one lackey only. We had already passed Colmenar, and were engaged in a hollow road, between two mountains, when we perceived a cavalier defending himself valiantly against three men who attacked him al-

together. I did not hesitate, but rode to his succour, and put myself on his side. I observed, while we fought, that our enemies were masked, and that we had to do with vigorous swordsmen: however, in spite of their strength and skill, we remained conquerors; for I pierced one of the three, who fell from his horse, and the other two immediately betook themselves to flight. The victory, indeed, was not much less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I killed; since, after the action, my companion and I found ourselves dangerously wounded. But you may guess what was my surprise, when in this cavalier I recollected Combados, the husband of Donna Helena! He was no less astonished when he saw that I was his defender: 'Ah, Don Gaston!' cried he, 'was it you then who came to my assistance! When you so generously espoused my cause, you little thought it was that of the man who deprived you of your mistress.' 'I was really ignorant of it,' answered I, 'but had I known you, do you imagine that I should have scrupled to do what I have done? are you so much mistaken in me as to think me so base?' 'No, no,' he replied, 'I have a better opinion of your virtue; and if I die of the wounds which I have received, I hope yours will not hinder you from profiting by my death.' 'Combados,' said I, 'although I have not yet forgot Donna Helena, know, that I don't desire to enjoy her at the expense of your life; I am even glad of having contributed towards saving you from the swords of three assassins, since in

that I have performed an action agreeable to your wife.' While we conversed in this manner, my lackey alighted, and approaching the dead cavalier, took off his mask and discovered features which Combados immediately knew. 'It is Caprara!' cried he, 'that perfidious cousin, who, out of spite for having been disappointed of a rich estate which he unjustly disputed with me, has a long time cherished the desire of murdering me, and at length chosen this day to put it in execution; but heaven hath permitted him to fall a victim to his own design.'

"Meanwhile our blood flowed apace, and we grew weaker and weaker: nevertheless, wounded as we were, we had strength enough to go to the town of Villarejo, which was but two gun-shots from the field of battle. We alighted at the first inn we came to, and sending for surgeons, one was brought who had the reputation of being very expert in his profession: he examined our wounds, which he found dangerous; then dressed them, and next day, after having taken off the dressings, declared that the wounds of Don Blas were mortal; he judged more favorably of mine, and his prognostics were fulfilled.

"Combados hearing his doom, thought of nothing but preparing for death: he likewise dispatched an express to inform his wife of what had happened, and of his present melancholy situation; upon which Donna Helena setting out immediately, soon arrived at Villarejo, her mind disturbed with

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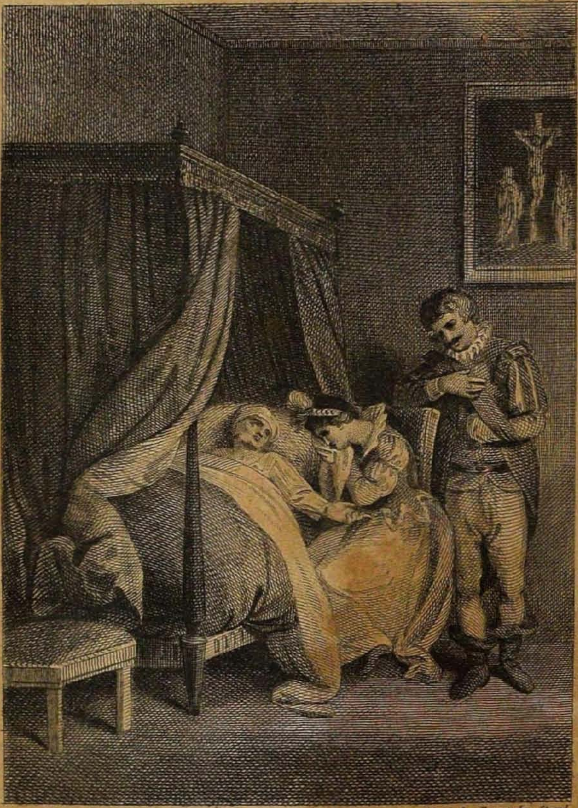

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a disquiet which had two different causes: the danger in which her husband was, and the dread of feeling, at sight of me, a flame which was but half extinguished, revive, created a terrible agitation in her breast. 'Madam,' said Don Blas, when she came into his presence, 'you arrive time enough to receive my last adieu: I am going to die, and regard my death as the punishment of heaven, for having by a deceit deprived you of Don Gaston. Far from murmuring at my fate, I exhort you to restore to him the heart which I unjustly seized.' Donna Helena answered only by her tears; and truly it was the best reply she could make, as she was not as yet so much detached from me as to forget the artifice which he had practised to make her break her vows.

"As the surgeon had prognosticated, Combados died of his wounds in less than three days, while mine indicated a speedy cure. The young widow, who was wholly engrossed by the care of transporting the husband's corpse to Coria, in order to perform all the funeral honors which she owed to his ashes, departed from Villarejo, after having inquired (through mere politeness) about my health. As soon as I could follow her, I set out also for Coria, where my recovery being completed, my aunt Donna Eleonora and Don George de Galisteo resolved that Helena and I should be married forthwith, lest fortune should again part us by some unlucky accident. This marriage was celebrated in private on account of the too recent

death of Don Blas; and a few days after, I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As I had exceeded the time prescribed by the count-duke for my journey, I was afraid that he had given to another the lieutenancy which he had promised to me: but he had not disposed of it, and was so good as to admit the excuses which I made for my delay.

"I am now," continued Cogollos, "lieutenant of the Spanish guard, am pleased with my employment, and have contracted some agreeable friends, with whom I live very happily." "I wish I could say as much," cried Don Andrea; "but I am very far from being satisfied with my condition: I have lost my post, which was pretty advantageous: and I have no friends who have credit enough to procure me such another." "Pardon me, Signior Don Andrea," said I, smiling, "you have in me a friend who is good for something. I have already said that I am still better beloved by the count-duke than ever I was by the Duke of Lerma; and you have the assurance to tell me to my face, that you have not a friend who can procure a good post for you. Have I not once before done you such a piece of service? Remember, that, by the interest of the Archbishop of Granada, I was the occasion of your being named to exercise an employment at Mexico, where you would have made your fortune, if love had not detained you in the city of Alicant; and I am at present more capable of serving you, having the ear of the prime minister." "I trust wholly

to you then," replied Tordesillas; "but," added he, smiling in his turn, "pray don't send me to New Spain; I would not go thither if I was to be made chief judge of Mexico."

We were interrupted in this part of our conversation by Donna Helena, who came into the hall, and whose amiable person equalled the charming idea which I had formed of her beauty. "Madam," said Cogollos to her, "this is Signior de Santillane, of whom you have heard me speak, and whose agreeable company hath often suspended my sorrows while I was in prison." "Yes, madam," said I to Donna Helena, "my conversation pleased him, because you was always the subject of it." Don George's daughter made a modest reply to my compliment; after which I took my leave of this couple, protesting that I was ravished to find their long passion was at length crowned by a happy marriage. Then addressing myself to Tordesillas, I desired him to give me his direction, which when I received, "Without bidding you adieu, Don Andrea," said I, "I hope, in less than eight days, you will see that I have power as well as friendship." My words were soon verified; the very next day the count-duke furnished me with an occasion to oblige the keeper. "Santillane," said his excellency, "the place of governor of the royal prison at Valladolid is vacant: it brings in more than three hundred pistoles per annum, and I am resolved to bestow it upon thee." "I would not have it, my lord," answered I, "were

it worth ten thousand ducats yearly: I renounce all posts that I cannot enjoy without removing from your grace." "But," resumed the minister, "thou mayest very well enjoy this, without being obliged to leave Madrid, except to go sometimes to Valladolid to visit the prison." "You may say what you please," I replied; "I will not accept of that employment, but on condition that I shall be allowed to resign in favor of a brave gentleman called Don Andrea de Tordesillas, formerly keeper of the tower of Segovia: I should love to make him that present, as an acknowledgment for the kind treatment I received from him during my confinement."

The minister laughing at this discourse, said, "I see, Gil Blas, thou hast a mind to make a governor of a royal prison, as thou hast made a viceroy. Well, be it so, my friend; I give to thee this vacant place for Tordesillas; but tell me freely, what advantage thou wilt reap from it: for I don't believe thee fool enough to employ thy credit for nothing." "My lord," answered I, "ought not a man to pay his debts? Don Andrea, in the most disinterested manner, did me all the service he could: ought not I to requite his generosity?" "You are become very disinterested, Mr. Santillane," said his excellency, "I think you were not so much so under the last minister." "I own it," said I; "my morals were corrupted by bad example: as every thing was then put to sale, I conformed myself to the fashion; and as

every thing is now given away, I have resumed my integrity."

I procured, then, the government of the royal prison of Valladolid for Don Andrea, whom, in a little time, I sent to that city, as well satisfied with his new settlement as I was with the opportunity of acquitting myself of the obligation I owed him.

CHAP. XIV.

SANTILLANE VISITS THE POET NUNNEZ: AN ACCOUNT OF THE PERSONS WHOM HE FOUND, AND THE DISCOURSE WHICH HE HAD, AT HIS LODGINGS.

One afternoon I was seized with an inclination of visiting the Asturian poet, being curious to know how he was lodged. I went accordingly to the house of Signior Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, and asking for Nunnez, "he does not live here," said the porter, "but lodges there at present, having hired the back-side of the house." So saying, he pointed to a house in the neighborhood, whither I went, and after having crossed a small court, entered into a naked hall, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his companions whom he treated that day.

They had almost dined, and consequently were in a trim for disputing; but as soon as they perceived me, their noisy discourse subsided into profound silence. Nunnez got up with great eagerness to receive me, crying, "Gentlemen, this is Signior de Santillane, who is so good as to honor me with a visit; pray join me in paying your respects to the favorite of the prime minister." At these words, all the guests got up to salute me; and in favor of the title which I had received, treated me with great civility and respect. Although

I was neither hungry nor thirsty, I could not excuse myself from sitting down at table with them; and was even obliged to honor the toast which they had proposed.

As I imagined that my presence was a check upon their conversation, "Gentlemen," said I, "I have interrupted your discourse: pray resume it, or I will be gone." "These gentlemen," said Fabricio, "were talking of the Iphigenia of Euripides. The bachelor Melchior de Villegas, who is a critic of the first order, was asking of Signior Don Jacinto de Romarata, what was the most interesting circumstance of the tragedy." "Yes," said Don Jacinto, "and I answered that it was the danger of Iphigenia." "And I," said the bachelor, "replied, (and I am ready to demonstrate my assertion,) that the danger is not the most interesting part of the subject." "What is, then?" cried the old licentiate Gabriel de Leon. "'Tis the wind," said the bachelor.

The whole company burst out into laughing at this repartee, which I could not believe serious; I thought that Melchior pronounced it with a view of enlivening the conversation; but I did not know this virtuoso, who was a man that did not at all understand raillery. "Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen," replied he drily, "I maintain that the wind alone ought to interest, surprise, and move the spectator: figure to yourselves a numerous army assembled to go and besiege Troy; conceive all the impatience of the chiefs

and soldiers to execute that enterprise, that they may speedily return into Greece, where they have left what is most dear to them, their wives, children, and household gods; in the meantime, a cursed contrary wind detains them at Aulis, seems to nail them to the port, and if it does not change they cannot go and besiege the city of Priam: it is the wind, therefore, which constitutes the most interesting point of that tragedy. I share with the Greeks, I espouse their cause, my whole wish is the departure of the fleet, and I see with indifference the danger of Iphigenia, since her death is the only means of obtaining a favorable wind from the gods."

Villegas had no sooner done speaking than the laugh was renewed at his expense. Nunnez was so mischievous as to support his opinion, that he might afford more game to the raillers, who began to pass a great many jokes upon the wind: but the bachelor beholding them all with a phlegmatic haughty look, treated them as ignorant and vulgar minds. I expected every moment to see them warm, and to go to loggerheads, the usual end of their dissertations: but I was baulked in my expectation; they were contented with reviling one another, and withdrew when they had eaten and drank their fill.

When they were gone, I asked Fabricio, why he did not live still with his treasurer: and if he had quarrelled with him? "Quarrelled!" answered he, "God forbid! I am more in favor than ever

with Signior Don Bertrand, who has allowed me to lodge by myself; I have, therefore, hired these lodgings, to receive my friends, and make merry with them in full liberty; which is often the case: for thou knowest that I am not of an humor to leave much wealth to my heirs; and what is very happy for me, I am, at present, in a condition of enjoying parties of pleasure every day." "I am overjoyed to hear it, my dear Nunnez!" said I, "and I cannot help congratulating thee again upon the success of thy last tragedy: the whole eight hundred dramatic pieces of the great Lope have not brought him one-fourth of what thou hast got by thy Count de Saldagne.

BOOK XII.

CHAP. I.

GIL BLAS IS SENT TO TOLEDO BY THE MINISTER: THE MOTIVE AND SUCCESS OF HIS JOURNEY.

DURING a whole month almost, his grace had been saying to me every day, "Santillane, the time draws nigh when I shall set thy address to work;" and still this time did not come. At length, however, it arrived; and his excellency spoke to me in these words: "It is reported that, in the company of players belonging to Toledo, there is a young actress whose talents make a great noise; it is said that she dances and sings divinely, and quite captivates the spectators by her declamation. I am assured also, that she has a considerable share of beauty. Such a genius deserves to appear at court. The king loves plays, music, and dancing, and he must not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing and hearing a person of such extraordinary merit. I have resolved, therefore, to send thee to Toledo, to judge by thyself, whether or not she is actually such a wonderful actress. I will be governed by the impression she shall make upon thee, as I depend a great deal

on thy discernment." I answered, that I should give his grace a good account of that affair; and prepared for my departure, with one lackey only, whom I ordered to put off the minister's livery, that things might be done the more mysteriously. And this was very much to his excellency's taste. I set out then for Toledo, where, when I arrived, I alighted at an inn near the castle. Scarce had I set my foot to the ground, when the landlord, taking me, doubtless, for some country gentleman, said to me, "Signior Cavalier, I suppose you are come to town to see the august ceremony of the *Auto da Fé*,* which is to be performed to-morrow." I answered in the affirmative, thinking it more prudent to let him believe that, than to give him an opportunity of questioning me about coming to Toledo. "You will see," he resumed, "one of the finest processions that ever happened: there are, I am told, more than a hundred prisoners, among which they reckon above ten who are to be burnt."

Next morning, indeed, before sun-rise, I heard all the bells of the city tolling; and this melancholy sound was to advertise the people that they were going to begin the *Auto da Fé*. Curious to see this solemnity, I put on my clothes in a hurry, and repaired to the Inquisition. All along the streets through which the procession was to pass, scaffolds were erected, upon one of which I hired a

* The Act of Faith.

place. In a little time I perceived the Dominicans, who walked foremost, preceded by the banners of the Inquisition. These good fathers were immediately followed by the wretched victims which were to be sacrificed that day by the holy office. These miserable creatures walked one after another with their heads and feet bare, each having a wax taper in his hand, and a godfather* by his side. Some had large scapularies of yellow stuff, garnished with St. Andrew's crosses painted red, and called Sanbenito; others wore carochas, which are high paper caps made in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and covered with flames and diabolical figures.

As I looked attentively at these unfortunate people, with a compassion which I took care to conceal, that I might not suffer for it, I thought I recollected, among those who had their heads adorned with carochas, the reverend Father Hilary, and his companion Brother Ambrose. They passed so near me that I could not be mistaken. "What do I see!" said I to myself; "Heaven, wearied with the disorderly lives of these wretches, hath delivered them at last to the justice of the Inquisition!" So saying, I felt myself seized with horror: I trembled from head to foot, and my spirits were so disordered that I had almost swooned. The connexion which I once had with these rogues, the adventure of Xelva, in short all the circumstances of my correspondence with them,

* People named by the inquisitor to accompany the prisoners to the *Auto da Fé*, and obliged to be answerable for them.

presented themselves that moment to my fancy: and I thought I could never be thankful enough to God, for having preserved me from the scapulary and carochas.

When the ceremony was ended, I returned to the inn, trembling at the dreadful spectacle which I had beheld: but these afflicting images which disturbed my imagination dispersed insensibly: and now my whole study was to acquit myself handsomely of the commission intrusted to my care. I waited impatiently for play-time, that I might go to the theatre, judging that to be the most proper beginning of my work: and as soon as the hour came, I went thither and sat down by a knight of Alcantara; with whom entering into conversation, "Signior," said I to him, "may a stranger be so bold as to ask you one question?" "Signior Cavalier," answered he, very politely, "I shall think it an honor." "I have heard the actors of Toledo," I resumed, "very much extolled; pray, have I been misinformed?" "No," replied the knight, "their company is not bad; nay, there are great players among them. You will see, among others, the fair Lucretia, an actress of fourteen years of age, who will surprise you very much. I shall have no occasion to point her out to you; when she appears, you will easily distinguish her from the rest." I asked if she was to play that evening; and he told me she would, observing at the same time that she had a very shining part to act in the piece which was going to be represented.

The play began; and two actresses, who had neglected nothing which could contribute towards rendering them charming, appeared on the stage: but in spite of the lustre of their diamonds, I took neither the one nor the other for her whom I expected. At length Lucretia walked forward from the bottom of the stage; and her appearance was saluted by a long and general clapping of hands. "Ah! there she is!" said I to myself; "what a noble air! what grace! what fine eyes! O the divine creature!" I was actually very well pleased, or rather passionately struck with her person. On hearing her recite the first couplet, I found she had nature, fire, and understanding above her age; and I willingly joined my applause to that which she received from the whole audience during the performance. "Well," said the knight to me, "you see how Lucretia is caressed by the public." "I am not at all surprised at it," answered I. "You would be less so still," said he, "if you had heard her sing. She is a perfect syren. Woe be to those who listen! Her dancing is no less formidable. Her steps, as dangerous as her voice, charm the eye, and force the heart to yield." If that be the case," cried I, "it must be owned she is a prodigy! What happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for such an admirable creature?"

"She has no declared lover," said he, "and even scandal has not as yet involved her in any private intrigue. Nevertheless," added he, "this may soon be the case: for Lucretia is under the

conduct of her aunt Estella, who is certainly the most expert of all the actresses." At the name of Estella, I interrupted the knight with precipitation, to ask if that Estella was an actress of the Toledo company. "She is one of the best of them," said he: "she has not acted to-day, and we have suffered by her absence: she usually plays the part of the waiting-woman, which she performs to admiration. Her action is full of spirit: perhaps too full: but it is an agreeable fault, which ought to be forgiven." The knight told me wonders of this Estella; and by the picture he drew of her person I never doubted that it was Laura, that same Laura of whom I have spoke so much in my history, and whom I had left at Granada.

However, to be more certain still, after the play, I went behind the scenes; and casting my eyes around, found her in the tyring-room talking to some gentlemen, who, perhaps, regarded her only as the aunt of Lucretia. I advanced to salute Laura; but whether through whim, or in order to punish me for my precipitate departure from Granada, she pretended not to know me, and received my civilities so drily that I was a little disconcerted. Instead of upbraiding her in a laughing humor for her cold behaviour towards me, I was fool enough to be nettled at it; I even retired hastily, resolving, in my passion, to return next day to Madrid. "To be revenged of Laura," said I to myself, "her niece shall not have the honor of appearing before the king: for this purpose, I

can give to the minister such a description of Lucretia as I please. I have no more to do, but to tell him that she dances with a bad grace, that she has a squeaking voice, and, in short, that her charms consist in her youth only. I am sure his excellency, after that, will have no inclination to bring her to court."

Such was the vengeance I meditated against Laura for her behaviour to me; but my resentment did not last long: next day, just as I was about to depart, a page entered my chamber, and said, "Here is a letter for Signior de Santillane." "I am the person, my child," answered I, taking the letter, which contained these words:—"Forget the manner in which you was received last night in the tyring-room, and be so good as to follow the bearer."—I immediately took the page for my conductor, who, when we were near the play-house, introduced me into a very handsome house, where I found Laura at her toilet, in a very genteel apartment.

She got up to embrace me, saying, "Signior Gil Blas, I know that you have no cause to be pleased with the reception you met with when you came to salute me in our tyring-room; an old friend, like you, had a right to expect more civil treatment: but I must tell you, for my excuse, that I was then in a very bad humor. When you appeared, I was quite engrossed by some scandalous discourse which one of our gentlemen had uttered against my niece, whose honor is dearer to me

than my own. Your sudden retreat," added she, "made me immediately recollect myself; and that moment I ordered my page to follow you to your lodging, that I might to-day make amends for my fault." "That is already done, my dear Laura," said I: "let us talk no more of that matter: let us rather inform one another of what has happened to us since the unlucky day in which the dread of just chastisement made me quit Granada with great precipitation. I left you, you may remember, in pretty great perplexity: pray, how did you extricate yourself? Had you not occasion for all your address to appease your Portuguese lover?" "Not at all," replied Laura: "don't you know, that in such cases the men are so weak, that they sometimes even spare the women the trouble to justify themselves. I affirmed," continued she, "to the Marquis of Marialva, that thou wast my brother. Pardon me, Mr. Santillane, if I speak to you as familiarly as heretofore: but I can't get rid of my old habits. I tell thee then," that I brazen'd it out; 'Don't you see,' said I to the Portuguese nobleman, 'that all this is the effect of jealousy and rage? Narcissa, my comrade and rival, incensed to see me in quiet possession of a heart of which she is balked, has played me this trick: she has bribed the under candle-snuffer, who, as the minister of her resentment, has the impudence to say, that he has seen me Arsenia's chambermaid. Nothing can be more false: the widow of Don Antonio Cœlo always entertained too noble senti-

ments, to humble herself so low as to serve an actress. Besides, what proves the falsity of the accusation, and the conspiracy of my accusers, is the precipitate retreat of my brother: if he was present, he might confound their slander; but Narcissa has, doubtless, employed some new artifice to make him disappear.' Though these reasons," pursued Laura, "made but an indifferent apology, the marquis was so good as to be satisfied with it: and that good-natured nobleman continued to love me, until the day of his departure from Granada, on his return to Portugal. Indeed, he did not stay long after thee: and the wife of Zapata had the pleasure of seeing me lose the lover of whom I had deprived her. After that I lived some years at Granada: then a division happening in our company, which is often the case, all the players separated: some went to Seville, others to Cordova; and I came to Toledo, where I have been ten years, with my niece Lucretia, whom thou must have seen act last night since thou wast at the play."

I could not help laughing in this place; and Laura asking the cause, "Can't you guess?" said I: "you have neither brother nor sister, and, of consequence, cannot be Lucretia's aunt. Besides, when I calculate the time which hath elapsed since our last separation, and compare it with the age of your niece, I cannot help thinking that you are more nearly related."

"I understand you, Mr. Gil Blas," replied Don

Antonio's widow, reddening; "what a chronologist you are! it is impossible to make you believe it. Well then, my friend, Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis of Marialva; she is the fruit of our correspondence; I can no longer conceal it from thee." "What a great effort you make, my princess," said I, "in revealing that secret, after having imparted to me your adventures with the steward of the hospital of Zamora. I must tell you, moreover, Lucretia is a maid of such singular merit, that the public can never be thankful enough to you for having made such a present to it. It were to be wished that all your comrades had done the same." If some mischievous reader, in this place, recollecting the private conversations which I had with Laura at Granada, while I was secretary to the Marquis of Marialva, suspects that I might have disputed with that nobleman the honor of being Lucretia's father, it is a suspicion, the injustice of which I must avow to my shame. I recounted my principal adventures to Laura, in my turn, and made her acquainted with my present situation. She listened to my narration so attentively, as to shew that it was far from being indifferent to her: and when I had finished it, "Friend Santillane," said she, "I find you act a very considerable part on the theatre of the world; and you cannot imagine how much I am overjoyed at your good fortune. When I shall bring Lucretia to Madrid, with an intention to introduce her into the Prince's company, I flatter myself that she will find a pow-

erful protector in Signior de Santillane." "Never doubt that," answered I, "you may depend upon me: I will procure your daughter's admittance into the Prince's company whenever you please: this is what I can promise, without presuming too much upon my power." "I would take you at your word," replied Laura, "and set out for Madrid to-morrow, were I not restricted to this place by engagement with our company." "An order from court can break these ties," said I, "and you shall receive one in less than eight days. I shall be pleased in taking Lucretia from the Toledans: such a handsome actress is destined for courtiers, and properly belongs to us."

Lucretia entered the room just as I had pronounced these words: and seemed so pretty and engaging, that I took her for the goddess Hebe. She had just risen; and her natural beauty shining without the help of art, presented a ravishing object to my view. "Come, niece," said her mother to her, "come and thank this gentleman for his friendship: he is an old acquaintance of mine, who has great interest at court, and intends to introduce us both into the Prince's company. These words seemed to give pleasure to the dear girl, who made me a low curtsey; and said, with an enchanting smile, "I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but, in taking me from the people by whom I am beloved, are you sure that I shall please the audience at Madrid? I shall, perhaps, lose by the change. I remember to have

heard my aunt say, that she has seen actors caressed in one place, and hissed in another; and this gives me some concern: beware of exposing me to the contempt, and yourself to the reproaches of the court." "Fair Lucretia," answered I, "neither you nor I have reason to be apprehensive of that: I rather fear that, by inflaming all that behold you, you will create some misunderstanding among our grandees." "The fear of my niece," said Laura, "is better founded than yours: but I hope they are both in vain: if Lucretia cannot make a noise by her charms, in recompense, she is no contemptible actress."

Our conversation lasted some time longer; and I had reason to conclude, from every thing which Lucretia said, that she was a maid of a superior genius. I then took my leave of the two ladies, assuring them that they should soon have an order from court to repair to Madrid.

CHAP. II.

SANTILLANE GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS COMMISSION TO THE MINISTER, WHO EMPLOYS HIM TO BRING LUCRETIA TO MADRID. THE ARRIVAL OF THAT ACTRESS, AND HER APPEARANCE AT COURT.

At my return to Madrid, I found the count-duke very impatient to know the success of my journey. "Gil Blas," said he, "hast thou seen this same actress? Is she worth bringing to court?" "My lord," I replied, "Fame, which usually praises beauties more than they deserve, has not said enough in commendation of young Lucretia; she is an admirable creature, both as to her person and talents." "Is it possible!" cried the minister, with an interior satisfaction which I read in his eyes, and which made me believe that he had sent me to Toledo on his own account,—"is it possible that she can be so amiable?" "When you have seen her," answered I, "you will own that no eulogium can do justice to her charms." "Santillane," said his excellency, "give me a faithful relation of thy journey; I shall be very glad to hear it." To satisfy my master, I then recounted all, even the history of Laura inclusively. I told him, that this actress had Lucretia by the Marquis of Marialva, a Portuguese nobleman, who stopping at Granada on his travels, fell in love with her. In short, when I had recounted to his grace every thing that happened between the two actresses and me,

he said, "I am overjoyed to hear that Lucretia is the daughter of a man of quality; that circumstance interests me still more in her behalf; she must be brought to town. But," added he, "continue as thou hast begun; let not me appear in it, every thing must pass in the name of Gil Blas de Santillane."

I went and told Carnero, that his excellency desired him to expedite an order, by which the king received into his company Estella and Lucretia, two actresses of Toledo. "Aha! Signior de Santillane," said Carnero with a satirical smile, "yes, you shall be served immediately, since, in all appearance, you interest yourself for these two ladies." At the same time he wrote an order with his own hand, and delivered it to me to be expedited; so that I sent it instantly to Estella by the same lackey who had attended me to Toledo. Eight days after, the mother and daughter arriving at Madrid, took lodgings hard by the Prince's company, and their first care was to give me notice of it by a billet. I visited them immediately, where, after a thousand offers of service on my side, and as many acknowledgments on theirs, I left them to prepare for their first public appearance, which I wished might be brilliant and successful.

They advertised themselves as two new actresses, whom the Prince's company had received by an order from court; and they began with a comedy which they had often acted at Toledo with applause. In what part of the world are new sights

disregarded? The play-house was that day filled with an extraordinary concourse of spectators; and you may well imagine that I did not fail to be there. I suffered a little before the piece began; and, prepossessed as I was in favour of the talents both of mother and daughter, I trembled for them, so much was I interested in their success. But scarce had they opened their mouths, when my fear was banished by the applause which they received. Estella was looked upon as a consummate comic actress, and Lucretia as a prodigy in tender parts. This last captivated all hearts. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched by the sweetness of her voice; and every body, struck with the graces and brilliancy of her youth, went away enchanted by her appearance.

The count-duke being more interested than I imagined in the first essay of this actress, was at the play that evening; and I saw him go out about the end of the performance, seemingly very well satisfied with our two new players. Curious to know if he was really affected with their success, I followed him home, and going into his closet just after him; "Well, my lord," said I, "is your excellency satisfied with young Marialva?" "My excellency," answered he smiling, "would be very nice indeed, if I refused to join my vote to that of the public. Yes, child, I am charmed with thy Lucretia, and I don't doubt that the king will be pleased when he sees her."

CHAP. III.

LUCRETIA MAKES A GREAT NOISE AT COURT, AND ACTS BEFORE THE KING, WHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER. THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS PASSION.

THE appearance of two new actresses soon made a noise at court; the very next day it was spoke of at the king's levee. Some noblemen extolled young Lucretia in particular, and drew such a beautiful picture of her, that the monarch was struck with it: but dissembling the impression which their discourses made upon his heart, he seemed to take no notice of what they said. Nevertheless, as soon as he found himself alone with the count-duke, he asked who this actress was, whom they praised so much. The minister answered, that she was a young player of Toledo, who had made her first appearance the preceding night with great success. "She is called Lucretia," added he, "a name very suitable to people of her profession. She is an acquaintance of Santillane's, who spoke so much in her favour, that I thought proper to receive her into your majesty's company."

The king smiled when he heard my name mentioned, because he remembered perhaps at that moment, that it was I who had made him acquainted with Catalina, and foresaw that I should do him the same service on this occasion. "Count," said

he to the minister, "I will go to-morrow and see this Lucretia act. Take care to advertise her of my intention."

The count-duke, having repeated this conversation to me, and informed me of the king's design, sent me to impart it to our two actresses. "I come," said I to Laura, who was the first I met, "to tell you a piece of great news; you will to-morrow have among your spectators the sovereign of this monarchy; this is what I am ordered by the minister to acquaint you with. I don't doubt that your daughter and you will do your utmost to deserve the honour which the king intends you; but I advise you to choose a piece in which there is both dancing and music, that he may admire all the talents of Lucretia together." "We will take your advice," replied Laura, "and do all in our power to amuse the prince." "He cannot fail of being pleased," said I, "seeing Lucretia come in, in a dishabille, which gave her more charms than the most superb theatrical dress. He will be so much the more satisfied with your lovely niece, as he loves singing and dancing above all other entertainments; who knows but he may be tempted to throw the handkerchief at her?" "I don't at all wish," replied Laura, "that he may have any such temptation; notwithstanding his being a powerful monarch, he might find obstacles to the accomplishment of his desires. Lucretia is virtuous, though bred behind the scenes: and whatever pleasure she may feel in seeing herself applauded on

the stage, she would much rather pass for a modest girl than for a good actress."

"Why should my aunt," said young Marialva, joining in the conversation, "form such chimeras to fight with? I shall never be obliged to repulse the sighs of the king; the delicacy of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve, if he could humble his attention to me." "But, charming Lucretia," said I, "should it happen that the prince would attach himself to you, and choose you for his mistress, would you be so cruel as to let him languish in your chains like an ordinary lover?" "Why not," answered she. "Yes, doubtless: and though virtue were out of the question, my vanity would exult much more in resisting than in yielding to his passion." I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura talk in this manner; and left the ladies, praising the last for having bestowed such good education on the other.

Next day, the king, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play. They acted a performance mixed with songs and dances, in which our young actress shone very much. From the beginning to the end, I kept my eyes fixed on the monarch, and in his look endeavoured to read his thoughts; but he baffled my penetration by an air of gravity which all along he affected to preserve. I did not learn till next day what I was so curious to know. "Santillane," said the minister to me, "I have just left the king, who has spoken to me of Lucretia with

so much vivacity, that I am convinced he is captivated by that young player; and as I told him that thou wast the occasion of bringing her from Toledo, he said he should be glad to talk with thee in private on that subject. Go instantly and present thyself at his chamber-door, where there is an order already given to admit thee. Run, therefore, and bring me back as soon as possible an account of the conversation."

I flew instantly to the palace, where I found the king alone, walking very fast, in expectation of my coming, and seemingly very much perplexed. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, whose history he obliged me to recount: he then asked if the little gentlewoman had never been engaged in any intrigue. I boldly assured him that she had not (though these sort of assurances are a little rash), and the prince seemed very glad to hear it. "If that be the case," said he, "I choose thee for my agent with Lucretia; and desire, that by thy means she may this evening learn her victory. Go, signify her conquest from me," added he, putting into my hand a diamond necklace worth forty thousand crowns, "and tell her that I desire she will accept of that present, until I give her more solid marks of my affection."

Before I performed this commission, I went back to the count-duke, and made a faithful report of what the king had said: with this I imagined the minister would be more afflicted than rejoiced, for I believed (as I have already observed),

that he himself had amorous views upon Lucretia, and would be chagrined to hear that his master was become his rival; but I was mistaken. Far from seeming mortified at the news, it gave him so much joy, that, being unable to contain it, some words escaped him which did not fall to the ground. "Aha! Philip," cried he, "egad, I have you fast. For once you will be sick of business." This apostrophe disclosed the whole contrivance of the count-duke. I now perceived that the minister, being afraid of the king's applying himself to serious affairs, endeavored to amuse him with pleasures more suitable to his humor. "Santillane," said he afterwards, "lose no time: make haste, my friend, to go and execute the important order which thou hast received, and which a great many noblemen at court would glory in performing. Consider," said he, "that thou hast here no Count de Lemos to deprive thee of one-half of the honor acquired in this service. Thou wilt have it entirely to thyself, and moreover enjoy all the fruits of it.

Thus did his excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed down gently, though not without tasting the bitterness of it: for, since my imprisonment, I had been used to look upon things in a moral point of view, and did not think the post of Mercury in chief quite so honorable as it was called. However, though I was not vicious enough to perform it without remorse, I had not virtue sufficient to make me refuse the employment. I therefore

obeyed the king the more willingly, as I saw at the same time that my compliance would be agreeable to the minister, whom it was my sole study to please. I thought proper to address myself at first to Laura, to whom, in a private conversation, I disclosed my mission in a discreet manner; and, towards the end of the discourse, presented the jewels: at sight of which, the lady being unable to conceal her joy, gave a loose to it. "Signior Gil Blas," cried she, "I ought not to constrain myself before my oldest and best friend. I should be to blame in affecting a false severity of morals, and making grimaces with you. Yes, you need not doubt it," continued she, "I am overjoyed that my daughter has made such a precious conquest, all the advantages of which I comprehend; but, between you and me, I am afraid that Lucretia will look upon them with a different eye: for, though a young actress, she is so careful of her chastity, that she has already rejected the addresses of two young noblemen both amiable and rich. You may say, indeed, that these were not kings. True; and in all probability the passion of a crowned head will shake the virtue of Lucretia. Nevertheless, I must tell you, that the thing is uncertain, and I declare that I will never force the inclinations of my daughter. If, far from thinking herself honored by the transient affection of the king, she shall regard that honor as infamous, let not that great prince be disobliged if she shall conceal herself from him. Return to-morrow," added

she, "and then I will tell you whether you must carry back to him a favorable answer or his jewels.

I did not at all doubt that Laura would exhort Lucretia to swerve from her duty, rather than remain in it, and I depended a good deal on that exhortation. Nevertheless, I learned with surprise next day, that Laura had as much difficulty in swaying her daughter to vice, as other mothers have to form theirs to virtue; and, which is still more surprising, Lucretia, after having granted some private interviews to the monarch, felt so much remorse for having yielded to his desires, that she quitted the world all of a sudden, and shut herself up in the monastery of the Incarnation, where she soon fell sick and died of grief. Laura being inconsolable for the loss of her daughter, whose death she upbraided herself with, retired into the convent of the Female Penitents, there to mourn the pleasures of her youth. The king was affected by the unexpected retreat of Lucretia; but being of a humor not to be long afflicted at any thing, consoled himself by degrees for this event. As for the count-duke, although he did not seem very much touched at this incident, it did not fail to give him a great deal of mortification; and this the reader will easily believe.

CHAP. IV.

SANTILLANE IS INVESTED BY THE MINISTER WITH A NEW EMPLOYMENT.

I WAS also sensibly affected by the misfortune of Lucretia, and felt such remorse for having contributed to it, that, looking upon myself as an infamous wretch, in spite of the quality of the lover whose passion I had served, I resolved to abandon the Caduceus for ever. I even expressed to the minister the reluctance I had to bear it, and begged he would employ me in something else. "Santillane," said he, "I am charmed with thy delicacy; and, since thou art a man of such honor, will give thee an occupation more suitable to thy virtue. This it is; listen attentively to what I am going to impart.

"Some years before I was in favor,," continued he, "chance one day presented to my view a lady so handsome and well made that I ordered her to be followed. I learned that she was a Genoese, called Donna Margarita Spinola, who lived at Madrid on the revenue of her beauty, and that Don Francisco de Valeasar,* an alcade of the court,

* Don Francisco Valeasar actually married this lady when she was big with child, and adopted the boy, whom he educated and acknowledged as his own son, during the space of 31 years; at the expiration of which, the count-duke finding himself without heirs male, had him legitimated and created Marquis of Mayenza.

a rich old married man, spent a great deal of money upon the coquette. This report, which ought to have inspired me with contempt for her, made me conceive a violent desire of sharing her favors with Valeasar; and to satisfy it, I had recourse to a female go-between, who had the address in a little time to procure for me a private interview with the Genoese; and that was followed by many more, so that my rival and I were equally well treated for our presents. Perhaps, too, she had other gallants as happy as we were.

"Be that as it will, Margarita, in receiving such confused homage, insensibly became pregnant, and brought forth a son, the honor of whom she bestowed on each of her lovers in particular; but not one of them being in conscience able to boast himself the father of that child, it was disowned by them all; so that the Genoese was obliged to maintain it with the fruit of her intrigues; this she did for eighteen years, at the end of which term dying, she has left her son without fortune, and, which is worse, without education.

"This," pursued his grace, "is the secret I had to impart, and I will now inform thee of the great design which I have projected. I will bring this unfortunate child from obscurity, and making him pass from one extreme to another, raise him to honors, and own him for my son."

At this extravagant project, it was impossible for me to hold my tongue. "How, my lord," cried I, "can your excellency have taken such a

strange resolution? Pardon me for using that term, which hath escaped my zeal." "Thou wilt find it is very prudent," he replied with precipitation, "when I have told thee the reasons that have determined me to take it. I don't desire that my collaterals should be my heirs. Thou wilt say that I am not as yet of such an advanced age as to make me despair of having children by my Lady Olivares. But every one knows himself best. Let it suffice to tell thee, that there is no secret in chemistry which I have not tried in vain to become a father. Therefore, since fortune, supplying the defect of nature, presents a child to me whose true father perhaps I am, I am resolved to adopt him." When I saw the minister bent on this adoption, I ceased to oppose it, knowing him to be a man capable of committing a foolish action rather than swerve from his own opinion. "The sole business now," added he, "is to bestow education upon Don Henry Philip de Guzman, for this name I intend he shall bear, until he shall be in a condition to possess the dignities that await him. Thou, my dear Santillane, art the person whom I choose to be his tutor. I confide in thy understanding and attachment to me for thy care in regulating his family, in giving him all sorts of masters; in a word, of making him an accomplished cavalier." I would have refused this employment, representing to the count-duke, that I was very ill-qualified to educate young noblemen, having never practised that business, which required more knowledge

and merit than I possessed. But he interrupted me, and shut my mouth, by saying, " that he was absolutely resolved to make me governor to this adopted son, whom he destined for the first offices of the monarchy." I prepared myself therefore to fill this place, for the satisfaction of his grace, who, to reward my compliance, increased my small revenue with a pension of a thousand crowns, which he procured, or rather gave me, on the commandery of Mandra.

CHAP. V.

THE SON OF THE GENOESE LADY IS OWNED BY AN AUTHENTIC ACT, AND CALLED DON HENRY PHILIP DE GUZMAN. SANTILLANE FORMS THE FAMILY OF THAT YOUNG NOBLEMAN, AND HIRES ALL SORTS OF MASTERS FOR HIM.

THE count-duke in a little time actually owned the son of Donna Margarita Spinola, and the deed was executed with the consent and inclination of the king. Don Henry Philip de Guzman (for that was the name given to this child of many fathers,) was declared sole heir of the Count d'Olivares, and of the duchy of San Lucar. The minister, that nobody might be ignorant of this event, ordered Carnero to communicate the declaration to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were not a little surprised at his conduct. The wits of Madrid had a fund of mirth from it a long time, and the satirical poets did not neglect such a fair occasion of shedding the gall of their pens.

When I asked where this gentleman was whom his grace intended to intrust to my care; "He is in this city," he replied, "under the direction of an aunt, from whom I will take him as soon as thou shalt have prepared a house for him." This was soon performed. I took a house, which I caused to be magnificently furnished; hired pages, a porter and footmen, and, with the assistance of Caporis, filled up the places of his officers. When I

had completed his attendants, I went and advertised his excellency, who immediately sent for his equivocal heir, and new shoot from the trunk of the Gúzmans, and I found him a tall young fellow of an agreeable person. "Don Henry," said his grace to him, pointing with his finger to me, "this gentleman is the guide whom I have chosen to conduct you in the career of life. I have the greatest confidence in him, and give him an absolute power over you. Yes, Santillane," said he, turning to me, "I abandon him entirely to your care, and don't doubt that you will give a good account of him." To this discourse the minister joined others, exhorting the young man to submit to my directions; after which, I conducted Don Henry to his house, where, when we arrived, I made all his domestics pass in review before him, signifying the office of each. He did not seem confounded at the change of his condition; and accommodating himself to the deference and officious respect that was shewn to him, he seemed to have been always that which he was now become by chance. He did not want capacity, but was wholly illiterate, being scarce able to read or write. I furnished him with a preceptor to teach him the elements of the Latin tongue, and hired for him masters of geography, history, and fencing. You may well believe that I did not forget a dancing-master: I was only embarrassed in the choice, for at that time there was a great number famous in that profession at Madrid, and I did not know to

whom I ought to give the preference. While I was in this perplexity, a man richly dressed came into the court, and I being told that he wanted to speak with me, went to him, imagining that he was at least a knight of St. Jago or Alcantara. When I asked his commands, " Signior de Santillane," answered he, after having made several bows, which smelled strongly of his profession, " understanding that your worship is the person who chooses masters for Signior Don Henry, I am come to offer my service; my name is Martin Ligero, and I have, thank heaven, some reputation. It is not my custom to come and solicit for scholars; that is the province of little obscure dancing-masters. I usually wait until I am sent for; but as I have taught the Duke de Medina Sidonia, Don Lewis de Haro, and some other noblemen of the family of Guzman, to which I am as it were a servant born, I thought it my duty to anticipate your message." " I find by your discourse," said I, " that you are the man we want. How much do you take per month?" " Four double pistoles," answered he, " is the current price, and I give but two lessons per week." " Four doubloons a month!" cried I, " that is a great deal." " How a great deal!" replied he with an air of astonishment, " you would give a pistole a month to a master of philosophy."

There was no resisting such a pleasant reply, at which I laughed heartily, and asked Signior Ligero, if he really thought a man of his profession

preferable to a master of philosophy. "Doubtless!" said he, "we are of much greater use than those gentlemen. What is a man before he has passed through our hands? what but an ill-licked cub? but our lessons mould him by little and little into a due form. In a word, we teach him to move gracefully giving him attitudes and airs of dignity and importance."

I yielded to the arguments of this dancing-master, whom I hired for Don Henry, at the rate of four double pistoles a month, since that was the price of great masters of his art.

CHAP. VI.

SCIPIO RETURNING FROM NEW-SPAIN, GIL BLAS SETTLES HIM IN THE SERVICE OF DON HENRY. THE STUDIES OF THAT YOUNG NOBLEMAN, WITH THE HONORS WHICH WERE CONFERRED UPON HIM, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE LADY TO WHOM HE WAS MARRIED. GIL BLAS BECOMES NOBLE IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

I HAD not as yet completed the half of Don Henry's family, when Scipio returned from Mexico. I asked him if he was satisfied with his voyage, and he answered, "I have reason to be so; since, with three thousand ducats in specie, I have brought over twice as much in merchandize of the consumption of this country." "I congratulate thee, my child," I replied. "Thy fortune is now begun; and it is in thy power to complete it, by returning to the Indies next year; or, if thou preferrest an agreeable post at Madrid, to the trouble of going so far to amass wealth, thou hast nothing to do but to speak, I have one at thy service." "Egad," said the son of Coscolina, "there is no room for hesitation. I would much rather execute a good employment near you, than expose myself anew to the perils of a long voyage. Pray, master, explain yourself, what post do you intend for your humble servant?"

For his better information, I recounted to him the story of the young nobleman whom the count-

duke had introduced into the family of Guzman; and after having told him that the minister had chosen me governor to Don Henry, I promised to make him valet de chambre to that adopted son. Scipio, who asked no better, willingly accepted the post, and acquitted himself in it so well, that in less than three or four days he acquired the confidence and friendship of his new master.

I imagine that the pedagogues whom I had chosen to teach the son of the Genoese would find their Latin thrown away, believing one at his age undisciplinable. But I was much mistaken. He easily comprehended and retained all that was shown to him, and his masters were very well satisfied with his capacity. I ran eagerly to impart this picce of news to the duke, who received it with excessive joy. "Santillane," cried he, transported, "I am ravished to hear that Don Henry has such a memory and penetration! I perceive my own blood in him; and what convinces me of his being my son is, that I feel as much affection for him as if he had been born by my Lady Olivares. Thou seest by this, my friend, that nature declares itself." I was not fool enough to tell his grace my sentiments of the matter; but, respecting his weakness, left him to enjoy the pleasure, whether true or false, of believing himself the father of Don Henry.

Although all the Guzmans entertained a mortal hatred of this young nobleman of fresh date, they dissembled it out of policy; nay some of them

affected to court his friendship; he was visited by the ambassadors and grandees who were then at Madrid, and honored by them as much as if he had been a legitimate son of the count-duke. This minister, overjoyed to see such incense offered to his idol, soon decked him with dignities. He began by asking of the king the cross of Alcantara, with a commandery worth ten thousand crowns, for Don Henry. In a little time after, he was made gentleman of the bed-chamber. Then resolving to marry him to a lady of the most noble family of Spain, he cast his eyes upon Donna Juana Velasco, daughter to the Duke of Castile, and had authority enough to accomplish the marriage, in spite of that duke and all his relations.

A few days before the marriage, his grace, having sent for me, put some papers into my hand, saying, "Hold, Gil Blas, here are letters of nobility, which I have ordered to be expedited for thee." "My lord," answered I, surprised at his words, "your excellency knows that I am the son of a poor duenna and squire; so that, in my opinion, the nobility would be profaned by my association; and it is, of all the favors which his majesty could bestow, that which I deserve and desire the least." "Thy birth," replied the minister, "is an objection that is easily removed; thou hast been employed in state affairs, both under the Duke of Lerma's ministry and mine: besides," added he, with a smile, "hast thou not done the monarch some service, which deserves a recompense? In a

word, Santillane, thou art not unworthy of the honor which I have procured for thee. Moreover, the rank which thou holdest with regard to my son, requires that thou shouldest be noble; and it is on that account that I have obtained the patent." "I yield, my lord," I replied, "since your excellency insists upon my compliance." So saying, I went away with my patent in my pocket.

"I am now a gentleman," said I to myself, when I had got into the street, "ennobled without being obliged to my parents for my quality. I may, when I please, be called Don Gil Blas, and if any one of my acquaintance shall take it in his head to laugh in my face when he calls me so, I will show my patent. But let us read it," continued I, taking it out of my pocket, "and see in what manner my original meanness is washed away." I therefore perused the paper, the substance of which was, that the king, to reward the zeal which I had manifested on more than one occasion for his service, and the good of the state, had thought proper to gratify my attachment with letters of nobility. I will venture to say in my own praise, that they did not inspire me with the least pride. Having the meanness of my extraction always before my eyes, this honor humbled instead of making me vain; therefore I determined to lock up my patent in a drawer, and never boast its being in my possession.

CHAP. VII.

GIL BLAS MEETS FABRICIO AGAIN BY ACCIDENT. THE LAST CONVERSATION THAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM, AND THE IMPORTANT ADVICE WHICH NUNNEZ GAVE TO SANTILLANE.

The Asturian poet, (as must have been observed by the reader,) willingly neglected me, and my occupations did not permit me to visit him. I had not seen him since the day of the dissertation on the Iphigenia of Euripides, when chance again threw him in my way near the gate of the sun. He was coming out of a printing-house, and I accosted him, saying, "Aha! Mr. Nunnez, you have been at the printer's; that seems to threaten the public with a new work of your composition." "That is what indeed it may expect," answered he. "I have actually in the press a pamphlet which will make some noise in the republic of letters." "I don't doubt the merit of thy production," I replied; "but am amazed at thy composing pamphlets, which in my opinion are trifles that do no great honor to a man of genius." I know it very well," said Fabricio, "and am not ignorant that none but those who read every thing amuse themselves with pamphlets. However, this one has escaped me, which I own is the child of necessity. Hunger, thou knowest, brings the wolf out of the wood."

"How!" cried I, "does the author of the Count de Saldagne talk in this manner? a man who has two thousand crowns a year!" "Softly, friend," said Nunnez to me, "I am no longer that happy poet who enjoyed a well-paid pension. The affairs of the treasurer Don Bertrand are disordered all of a sudden. He has fingered and squandered away the king's money; all his effects are seized, and my pension is gone to the devil." "That is a melancholy affair," I resumed, "but hast thou no hope remaining from that quarter?" "Not the least," said he. "Signior Gomez de Ribero, as poor as his poet, is gone to the bottom, and will never, it is said, get his head above water again."

"If that be the case, my child," answered I, "I must find out some post to console thee for the loss of thy pension." "I will spare thee that trouble," cried he. "If thou wouldst offer me an employment in the minister's offices worth three thousand crowns yearly, I would refuse it. The business of clerks will not agree with the humor of a foster child of the Muses: I must enjoy my literary amusements. What shall I say to thee? I am born to live and die a poet, and my destiny must be fulfilled.

"But don't imagine," continued he, "that we are very unhappy; besides that we live in perfect independence, we are boys without care. People think that we often dine with Democritus, and there they are mistaken. There is not one of my fraternity, not even excepting the makers of alma-

nacks, who is not welcome to some good table. As for my part, there are two families where I am always received with pleasure. I have two covers laid for me every day; one at the house of a fat director of the farms, to whom I have dedicated a romance; and the other at the house of a rich citizen, who has the disease of being thought to entertain wits every day at his table: luckily he is not very delicate in his choice, and the city furnishes him with great plenty."

"I no longer pity thee, then," said I to the Asturian poet, "since thou art satisfied with thy condition; though I protest to thee anew, that thou hast always in Gil Blas a friend, who is proof against thy neglect and indifference: if thou hast occasion for my purse, come boldly to me, and let not a silly shame deprive thee of an infallible succour, and rob me of the pleasure of obliging thee."

"By that generous sentiment," cried Nunnez, "I recollect my friend Santillane; I return a thousand thanks for thy kind offer, and out of gratitude will give thee a wholesome advice. While the count-duke continues in power, and thou art in possession of his favor, profit by the opportunity, make haste to enrich thyself, for I am told he begins to totter." I asked Fabricio if he had that intelligence on good authority, and he answered, "I have it from a knight of Calatrava, who has a very singular talent in discovering the most hidden secrets; he is looked upon as an oracle, and this

is what I heard him say yesterday: the count-duke has a great many enemies, who are all united to ruin him; he depends too much on the ascendancy which he has over the king; that monarch, it is reported, begins to listen to the complaints which have already reached his ears." I thanked Nunnez for his information, of which I took little notice, but went home, persuaded that my master's authority was immoveable, and considering him as one of those old oaks which are rooted in a forest, and which no storms can overthrow.

CHAP. VIII.

GIL BLAS IS CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH OF FABRICIO'S INTELLIGENCE. THE KING GOES TO SARAGOSSA.

NEVERTHELESS, what the Asturian poet had told me was not without foundation. There was in the palace a secret confederacy formed against the count-duke, and the queen was said to be at the head of it; but none of the measures which they took to displace the minister transpired: nay, a whole year passed before I perceived that his favor had received the least shock.

But the revolt of the Catalonians, supported by France, and the bad success of the war against these rebels, excited the murmurs of the people, who complained of the government. These complaints occasioned a council to be held in presence of the king, who desired the Marquis de Grana, the emperor's ambassador at the court of Spain, to be there. The subject of their deliberation being, whether it was most proper for the king to stay in Castile, or go and show himself to his troops in Aragon, the count-duke, who was averse to the prince's departure for the army, spoke first: he represented that it was better for his majesty to remain in the centre of his dominions; and supported his opinion with all the reasons which his eolquence could afford. He had no sooner con-

cluded his speech, than his advice was unanimously followed by every body in council, except the Marquis of Grana, who listened to nothing but his zeal for the house of Austria, and giving way to the frankness of his nation, opposed the sentiment of the prime minister, and supported the contrary opinion with such force, that the king was struck with the solidity of his arguments, embraced his opinion, though it was opposite to that of the whole council, and fixed the day of his departure for the army.

This was the first time that ever his majesty durst think otherwise than his favorite; who, looking upon this novelty as a bloody affront, was very much mortified. When the minister was going to retire into his closet, to bite upon the bridle at liberty, he perceived me, and taking me in along with him, recounted what had passed at council with great agitation: then, like a man who could not recollect himself from his surprise; "Yes, Santillane," continued he, "the king, who for these twenty years past hath spoke with my mouth, and seen through my eyes, now prefers the opinion of Grana to mine: and in what manner too? loading the ambassador with eulogiums, and, in particular, praising his zeal for the house of Austria, as if that German loved it better than I do.

"By this it is easy to judge," pursued the minister, "that there is a party formed against me, and that the queen is at the head of it." "Why, my lord," said I, "should you be uneasy with that

conjecture? Has not the queen, for more than twelve years, been used to see you at the helm; and the king has been in a long habit of not consulting her? As for the Marquis of Graña, the monarch, perhaps, chose his opinion out of desire to see his army, and make a campaign." "That is not the case," said the count-duke; "say, rather, my enemies hope that the king being among his troops, will always be surrounded by the noblemen who will attend him; and that more than one will be found so much disgusted at me, as to speak to the prejudice of my administration: but they are mistaken," added he; "I will make the prince inaccessible to them all during the journey." This he actually performed in a manner that deserves to be related.

The day of the king's departure being arrived, that monarch, after having entrusted the queen with the care of the government in his absence, set out for Saragossa; but in his way, passing by Aranjuez,* was so delighted with the place, that he staid there almost three weeks: from thence the minister carried him to Duenza, where he amused him still longer by various diversions.

* Aranjuez is a royal palace in New Castile, situated near the rivers of Taio and Garama, in a large plain surrounded by hills and forests, through which are many spacious avenues. The entrance to this palace is over two painted wooden bridges upon the aforesaid rivers, which joined a little below the house. Here is a delightful garden; and in a large square, paved with marble, a statue in brass of Charles the Fifth, armed cap-a-pee, trampling upon heresy, represented by four arch-heretics.

Then the pleasures of the chase detained him at Molina of Aragon; after which he was conducted to Saragossa,

His army being not far from thence, he prepared for going to it; but the count-duke altered his inclination, by making him believe that he would be in danger of being taken by the French, who were masters of the plain of Monçon; so that the king being afraid of the peril which he had no cause to fear, took the resolution of remaining shut up at home as in a prison. The minister taking advantage of his terror, and under pretence of watching for his safety, guarded him, as it were, from the sight of every body: and the grandees, who had been at a vast expense to put themselves in a condition to follow their sovereign, had not even the satisfaction of obtaining one private audience. Philip, at length, tired of being ill lodged at Saragossa, of passing his time still worse, or, if you please, of being prisoner, returned in a little time to Madrid. Thus this monarch finished his campaign, leaving to the Marquis de los Veles, general of his troops, the care of maintaining the honor of the Spanish arms.

CHAP. IX.

THE REVOLUTION OF PORTUGAL, AND THE DISGRACE OF THE COUNT-DUKE.

A FEW days after the king's return, a very disagreeable piece of news spread all over Madrid. It was reported that the Portuguese, looking upon the revolt of the Catalonians as a fair occasion offered to them by fortune for shaking off the Spanish yoke, had taken up arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their king; that they were resolved to maintain him on the throne, and were confident of success, Spain having at that time on her hands, enemies in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia: indeed they could not have found a more favorable conjuncture for freeing themselves from a dominion which they detested.*

What is very singular, is, that the count-duke, while both court and city seemed to be struck with consternation at the news, wanted to joke with the king at the expense of the Duke of Braganza; but Philip, far from being pleased with his

* This revolution, which happened in the year 1640, was conducted with such surprising secrecy (though the design was known to more than 200 persons a whole year before,) that the Duke of Braganza was declared king, and the Spanish yoke shook off in one day, through all the Portuguese dominions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

raillery, assumed a very grave air, which disconcerted him, and made him foresee his disgrace: he no longer doubted his own fall, when he understood that the queen had openly declared herself against him, and loudly accused him of having, by his bad administration, occasioned the revolt of Portugal. The greatest part of the grandees, especially those who had been at Saragossa, no sooner perceived that a tempest was brewing over the head of the count-duke, than they joined the queen: and what gave the last stroke to his favor was the arrival of the Duchess Dowager of Mantua, formerly governess of Portugal. This lady, on her return from Lisbon to Madrid, plainly demonstrated to the king, that the revolution of that kingdom happened through the fault of the prime minister.

The discourse of this princess made a great impression on the mind of the monarch, who being at length roused from his infatuation for his favorite, stript him of all the affection which he had entertained for him. When the minister was informed that the king listened to his enemies, he wrote a letter to him, asking leave to resign his employment, and remove from court, since people were so unjust as to impute to him all the misfortunes which had happened to the kingdom during the course of his administration. He thought that this letter would have a great effect, and that the prince still preserved so much friendship for him as to detain him at court; but all the answer which his majesty

returned was the permission that he desired, with leave to retire wheresoever he would.

These words, written by the king's own hand, were a thunderbolt to his grace, who by no means expected such a reply; but though he was very much confounded, he affected an air of constancy, and asked what I would do were I in his place? "I would soon take my resolution," said I; "I would abandon the court, and pass the rest of my days in peace, at some one of my estates in the country." "That is a wholesome advice," replied my master; "and I am fully resolved to finish my career at Loeches, after I shall have once more conversed with the king: for I want to demonstrate to him that I have done all that human prudence could suggest, to sustain the weighty burden with which I was loaded; and that it was impossible for me to prevent the melancholy events laid at my door; being no more to blame than a skilful pilot, who, in spite of all he can do, sees his vessel tossed about by the waves and winds." The minister still flattered himself that by speaking to the prince, he might adjust matters, and regain the ground which he had lost; but he never could procure an audience; and besides, one was sent to demand the key of the door by which he used to enter, when he pleased, into his majesty's apartment. Concluding then, that there were no farther hopes for him, he determined in good earnest to retire. He examined his papers, a great quantity of which he very prudently committed to the flames;

then naming the officers of his household and valets who he intended should follow him, he gave orders for his departure, which was fixed for next day. As he was afraid of being insulted by the populace in coming out of the palace, he slipt away early in the morning by the kitchen door, and getting into a sorry coach with his confessor and me, safely proceeded for Loeches, a village belonging to him, where his lady had built a magnificent convent of nuns of the Dominican order. Thither he repaired in less than four hours, and all his attendants arrived soon after.

CHAP. X.

THE ANXIETY AND CARES WHICH AT FIRST DISTURBED THE REPOSE OF THE COUNT-DUKE, AND THE HAPPY TRANQUILLITY BY WHICH THEY WERE SUCCEEDED. THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE MINISTER IN HIS RETREAT.

MADAM d'Olivares let her husband set out for Loeches, and staid a few days after him at court, with a design to try if by her tears and intreaties she could not effect his being recalled: but in vain did she prostrate herself before their majesties: the king had no regard to her remonstrances, though artfully prepared; and the queen, who hated her mortally, beheld her tears with pleasure. The minister's wife was not repulsed for all that: she humbled herself so far as to implore the good offices of the queen's ladies; but the fruit which she reaped from her meanness, was to perceive that it excited contempt rather than compassion. Vexed at having taken such humbling steps to no purpose, she went and joined her husband, to grieve with him for the loss of a place, which, under a reign like that of Philip the Fourth, was perhaps the first of the monarchy.

This lady's report of the condition in which she left Madrid, redoubled the affliction of the count-duke: "Your enemies," said she, weeping, "the Duke of Medina Celi, and the other gran-

dees who hate you incessantly, praise the king for having deprived you of the ministry; and the people celebrated your disgrace with an insolence of joy, as if the end of the national misfortunes was attached to that of your administration."

"Madam," said my master to her, "follow my example, and stifle your sorrow; we must yield to the tempest which we cannot divert. I thought, indeed, that I could have perpetuated my favor even to the end of my life; the ordinary illusion of ministers and favorites, who forget that their fate depends upon their sovereign; has not the Duke of Lerma been mistaken as well as I, though he imagined that his purple was the sure guarantee of the eternal duration of his authority?"

In this manner did the count-duke exhort his spouse to arm herself with patience; while he himself was in an agitation, which was daily increased by the dispatches which he received from Don Henry, who having remained at court to observe, took care to inform him exactly of every thing that happened: it was Scipio who brought the letters from that young nobleman, whom he still served, I having quitted him on his marriage with Don Juana. The dispatches of this adopted son were always filled with bad news, and unhappily, no others were expected from him. Sometime he wrote, that the grandees, not contented with rejoicing publicly at the retreat of the count-duke, were again re-united to turn all his creatures from the posts and employments which they pos-

sessed, to replace them with his enemies; another time, he observed, that Don Lewis de Haro began to come into favor, and would, in all probability, be made prime minister. Of all the disagreeable news which my master received, that which seemed to affect him most, was the change made in the viceroyalty of Naples, which the court, solely to mortify him, took from the Duke of Medina de las Tores, whom he loved, and gave it to the Admiral of Castile, whom he had always hated.

I may venture to say, that during three months, his grace felt nothing in his solitude but trouble and chagrin; but his confessor was a Dominican friar, and with the most solid piety possessed a manly eloquence, had power enough to console him. By means of representing with energy, that he ought to bend his thoughts entirely to his own salvation, he had, with the help of grace, the good fortune to detach his mind from the court. His excellency would no longer hear any news from Madrid, his whole care being now engrossed in preparing for his latter end. Madame d'Olivares also, making a good use of her retreat, met with a consolation prepared by Providence in the convent which she had founded: there were among the nuns some holy maidens, whose conversation, full of balm, insensibly sweetened the bitterness of her life; in proportion as my master turned his thoughts from worldly affairs, he became more and more tranquil, and in this manner regulated the day:—He spent almost the whole morning in

hearing mass in the church of the convent, then returned to dinner: after which he amused himself about two hours in playing at all sorts of games with me and some other of his most affectionate domestics; then usually retired by himself into his closet, where he remained till sun-set; at which time he took a turn in his garden, or an airing in his coach, to the neighbourhood of his castle, accompanied sometimes by his confessor, and sometimes by me.

One day, being alone with him, and admiring the serenity of his countenance, I took the liberty to say, "My lord, allow me to express my joy: from the air of satisfaction in your looks, I conclude that your excellency begins to be accustomed to retirement." "I am already quite familiarized to it," answered he; "and though I have been a long time used to business, I protest to thee, child, that I am every day more and more pleased with the quiet and peaceable life which I lead in this place."

CHAP. XI.

THE COUNT-DUKE BECOMES ALL OF A SUDDEN SAD AND THOUGHTFUL; THE SURPRISING CAUSE OF HIS MELANCHOLY, WITH ITS FATAL CONSEQUENCE.

HIS grace, in order to vary his occupations, amused himself sometimes also in cultivating his garden. One day, while I beheld him at work, he said to me in a jocular strain, "Santillane, thou seest a minister banished from court, turned gardener at Loeches." "My lord," answered I, in the same tone, "methinks I see Dionysius of Syracuse, school-master at Corinth." My master smiled at my reply, and was not at all displeased at the comparison.

All the people in the house were overjoyed to see their master, superior to his disgrace, charmed with a life so different from that which he had always led; when we perceived, with sorrow, that he visibly changed: he became gloomy, thoughtful, and sunk into a most profound melancholy. He left off playing with us, and no longer seemed sensible of all that we could invent for his diversion; but locked himself up, after dining, in his closet, where he remained alone till night: we imagined that his chagrin had been occasioned by the returning ideas of his past greatness, and in that opinion left with him the Dominican friar,

whose eloquence, however, could not triumph over the melancholy of his grace, which, instead of diminishing, seemed daily to increase.

It came into my head, that the pensiveness of this minister might have some particular cause, which he was unwilling to disclose; and on this conjecture I formed the design of drawing the secret from him: for this purpose, I lay in wait for an opportunity of speaking to him in private, and having found it, "My lord," said I, with an air of respect, mingled with affection, "may Gil Blas be so bold as to put one question to his master?" "Speak," he replied; "I give thee leave." "What," said I, "is become of that satisfaction which appeared in your excellency's face? Have you no longer that ascendancy which you had once gained over fortune? or does your lost favour excite new regret within you? Would you be plunged again in that abyss of trouble from which your virtue had extricated you?" "No, thank heaven," resumed the minister, "my memory is no longer engrossed by that part which I acted at court; I have for ever forgot the honors which I there enjoyed." "Why, then," said I, "since you have philosophy enough to banish these things from your remembrance, are you so weak as to abandon yourself to a melancholy which alarms us all? What is the matter with you, my dear master?" added I, throwing myself at his feet: "you have, doubtless, some secret sorrow that consumes you: will you make a mystery of

it to Santillane, whose zeal, fidelity, and discretion you know so well? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence?"

"Thou hast it still," said he: "but I confess I have a reluctance to reveal the cause of that sadness with which thou seest me overwhelmed: nevertheless, I cannot resist the intreaties of such a servant and a friend as thee. Know, then, the cause of my disquiet, which is a secret that I would impart to none but Santillane. Yes," continued he, "I am a prey to the most dismal melancholy, which gradually consumes my life. I see almost every moment a spectre, which presents itself before me in the most terrible shape. In vain have I said to myself, that it is no more than an illusion, an unsubstantial phantom of the brain: the continual apparition infests my view, and disturbs my repose. Though my understanding is strong enough to persuade me that this spectre is really nothing, I am notwithstanding weak enough to be afflicted at the vision. This is what thou hast forced me to disclose," added he; "and thou mayest judge whether or not I am to blame in concealing from all the world the cause of my melancholy." I was equally grieved and astonished to hear such an extraordinary declaration, which was a strong indication of the machine's being disordered. "My lord," said I to the minister, "is not this occasioned by too little nourishment; for your abstinence is excessive?" "That was what I imagined at first," answered he; and to try if it

was actually owing to my diet, I have, for some days past, eaten more than usual; but without any effect; the phantom still appears." "It will certainly disappear," said I, to console him: "and if your excellency would relax yourself a little, by playing again with your faithful servants, I believe you would soon find yourself delivered from these gloomy vapours."

In a little time after this conversation, his grace fell sick; and finding the affair grow serious, sent to Madrid for two notaries to make his will; as also, for three famous physicians, who had the reputation of curing their patients sometimes. As soon as the arrival of these last was reported in the castle, nothing was heard but groans and lamentations: the servants looked upon the death of their master as just at hand; so much were they prejudiced against these gentlemen, who had brought along with them an apothecary and surgeon, the usual executioners of their prescriptions. They let the notaries do their business; after which they prepared to do their own. Being of Dr. Sangrado's principles, in their very first consultation they ordered repeated bloodings; so that, in six days, they reduced the count-duke to extremity, and on the seventh, delivered him entirely from his apparition.*

* The count-duke died on the 12th of July, 1645, not at Loeches, but at Toro, in New Castile; his death (according to report) having been hastened by his relations, who seeing him become more and more odious to the people, even in spite of his retreat, were afraid of his suffering some new ignominy, to the farther disgrace of his family.

Upon the death of this minister, a deep and sincere sorrow reigned in the castle of Loeches; all his domestics wept bitterly: far from consoling themselves for his loss, with the certainty of being comprehended in his will, there was not one among them who would not have renounced his legacy to recal him to life. As for me, who had been beloved by him, and whose attachment flowed from pure personal affection, I was more afflicted than all the rest; and question whether I shed more tears for Antonio than for the count-duke.

CHAP. XII.

THE TRANSACTIONS AT THE CASTLE OF LOECHES, AFTER THE DEATH OF THE COUNT-DUKE; AND THE DEPARTURE OF SANTILLANE.

THE minister, according to his own direction, being buried without noise and pomp, in the convent of nuns, by the sound of our lamentations; after the funeral, Madam d'Olivares ordered the will to be read, with which all the domestics had reason to be satisfied. Every one had a legacy proportioned to his station; and the least was two thousand crowns: mine was the most considerable; his grace having bequeathed to me ten thousand pistoles, as a proof of his particular affection. He did not forget the hospitals, and founded annual service in several convents.

Madam d'Olivares sent all the domestics to Madrid, to receive their legacies from the steward Don Raymond Caporis, who had orders to pay them; but I could not accompany them, being detained at the castle seven or eight days by a high fever, which was the fruit of my affliction. In this situation, I was not abandoned by the Dominican friar: that good clergyman had conceived an affection for me; and interesting himself in my salvation, asked, when he saw me in the fair way, what I intended to do? "I don't know, my good father,"

answered I; "I have not as yet determined with myself on that score: at some moments I am tempted to shut myself up in a cell, and do penance." "Those are precious moments!" cried the Dominican: "Signior de Santillane, you will do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend, without your ceasing to be a layman, to retire, for example, into our convent at Madrid; to make yourself a benefactor to it, by a donation of all your fortune, and die there under the habit of St. Dominique. A great many people expiate a worldly life by such an end."

I was then in such a disposition of mind, that I began to relish the advice, and told his reverence that I would consider of it. But having consulted Scipio, whom I saw immediately after the monk, he inveighed against that sentiment, which seemed to him the whim of a sick person. "Fly! Signior de Santillane," said he, "can you be pleased with such a retreat? will not your house at Lirias afford one much more agreeable? If you was delighted with it heretofore, you will have a much better relish for the sweets of it, now that you are of an age much more proper for tasting the beauties of nature."

The son of Coscolina had no great difficulty in making me change my opinion. "Friend," said I, "thou hast prevailed over the Dominican. I see it will be better for me to return to my castle, and fix my resolution accordingly: we will repair to Lirias, as soon as I shall be in a condition to tra-

vel:" And this happened very soon; for the fever having left me in a little time, I found myself strong enough to put my design in execution. Scipio and I went first to Madrid, the sight of which city no longer gave me that pleasure which I formerly felt. As I knew that almost all its inhabitants abhorred the memory of a minister, of whom I preserved the most tender remembrance, I could not behold it with a favorable eye; and therefore staid in it only five or six days, which Scipio employed in making preparations for our departure for Lirias. While he was busy about our equipage, I went to Caporis, who gave me my legacy in doubloons. I likewise visited the receivers of the commanderies on whom I had pensions, took measures with them for the payment; and, in a word, put all my affairs in order.

On the evening before our departure, I asked the son of Coscolina if he had taken his leave of Don Henry? "Yes," answered he; "we this morning parted good friends: he assured me that he was sorry for my leaving him; but if he was satisfied with me, I was not so with him: it is not enough that the valet pleases the master; the master ought, at the same time, to please the valet; otherwise they are very ill met. Besides," added he, "Don Henry makes but a pitiful figure at court, where he is sunk into the lowest contempt. He is even pointed at in the streets, and every body calls him the son of the Genoese. So you may guess whether or not it is agreeable

to a lad of honor to serve a man in such disgrace."

At length we set out from Madrid early one morning, and took the road to Cuença, in the following order and equipage; my confidant and I mounted in a chaise and pair, conducted by a postillion: three moyles loaded with our baggage and money, and led by two grooms, followed close after; and two lusty lackeys, chosen by Scipio, mounted on mules, and armed to the teeth, brought up the rear; the grooms wore sabres, and the postillion had two good pistols at his saddle-bow. As we were in all seven men, six of whom were very resolute, I travelled merrily, without any apprehension of losing my legacy. Our moyles proudly sounding their bells in all the villages through which we passed, the peasants ran to their doors to see the march of our equipage, which they imagined belonged to some grandee going to take possession of a viceroyalty.

CHAP. XIII.

GIL BLAS RETURNS TO HIS CASTLE, WHERE HE IS OVERJOYED TO FIND SERAPHINA, HIS GOD-DAUGHTER, MARRIAGEABLE; AND FALLS IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER LADY.

I SPENT fifteen days on the road to Lirias, being under no necessity of travelling fast: all that I desired was to arrive at it safely; and my wish was accomplished. The sight of my castle at first inspired me with some melancholy thoughts, in recalling the memory of Antonia; but I soon banished them, by entertaining my fancy with more pleasant ideas: and this I could more easily do, as twenty years, which were elapsed since her death, had a good deal weakened the force of my sorrow.

As soon as I entered the castle, Beatrice and her daughter came with great eagerness to salute me: then the father, mother, and child hugged one another with transports of joy, which charmed me.

After their mutual embraces I looked at my god-daughter attentively, saying, "Can this be that Seraphina whom I left in the cradle, when I departed from Lirias! I am overjoyed to see her again, so tall and so handsome; we must have her settled for life." "How! my dear god-father," cried she, reddening at my last words, "you have seen me but for a moment, and you already talk

of getting rid of me!" "No, my child," answered I, "we don't intend to lose you by marriage: we must have a husband that will enjoy you, without robbing your parents of your company, and in a manner live with us altogether."

"Such an one offers at present," said Beatrice: "a gentleman of this country, having seen Seraphina one day at mass, in the village-chapel, fell in love with her. He has been to visit me, declared his passion, and asked my consent. If you had it, said I to him, you would be never the nearer; Seraphina depends upon her father and god-father, who alone can dispose of her. All that I can do for you is, to inform them by letter of your demand, which I own does honor to my daughter. Really, gentlemen," added she, "I was going to write about it immediately: but now that you are returned, you shall do in it what you think proper."

"But," said Scipio, "what character has this *Hidalgo**? is he like most of your small gentry, proud of his nobility, and insolent to plebeians?" "Not at all," replied Beatrice; "he is a sweet tempered young man, extremely polite, has a good mien, and is not yet full thirty." You draw an agreeable picture of that cavalier," said I to Beatrice: "pray, what is his name?" "Don Juan de Jutella," answered Scipio's wife: "he has but

* *Hidalgo*, literally the son of somebody, is an appellation given to a country gentleman in Spain.

lately succeeded to his father, and lives in a castle about a league from hence with a younger sister, who is under his care." "I have formerly," said I, "heard of this gentleman's family, which is one of the most noble in the kingdom of Valencia." "I esteem his nobility," cried Scipio, "less than the qualities of his heart and understanding; and this Don Juan will suit us very well, provided he be a man of honor." "He has the reputation of one," said Seraphina, joining in the conversation: "the inhabitants of Lirias, who know him, give him the best of characters." At these words of my god-daughter, I smiled to her father; who having likewise observed them, concluded that his daughter was not displeased at her gallant.

This cavalier soon got notice of our arrival at Lirias, and two days after appeared at our castle. He saluted us gracefully: and, far from contradicting by his presence what Beatrice had said to his advantage, his behaviour made us conceive a high opinion of his merit. He told us, that as our neighbour, he had come to congratulate us upon our happy return; and we received him with all the courtesy in our power: but this visit, which was made out of pure civility, passed in mutual compliments: and Don Juan, without having mentioned a syllable of his passion for Seraphina, retired, only desiring our permission to profit by a neighborhood, which he foresaw would be very agreeable to him. When he was gone, Beatrice asking our opinions of the gentlemen, we

answered, that he had prepossessed us in his favour; and that, in all appearance, fortune could not offer a better match for Seraphina.

The very next day I went out after dinner, with Coscolina's son, to return the visit which we owed to Don Juan. We took the road to his castle, conducted by a guide, who, when we had walked about three quarters of an hour, said, "There is the castle of Don Juan de Jutella." In vain did we cast our eyes all around the country; it was a long time before we perceived it; nay, we did not discover it till we arrived at the gate; for it was situated at the foot of a mountain, in the middle of a wood, whose lofty trees concealed it from the view. The house denoted the nobility more than the opulence of its master; however, when we entered, we found the craziness of the building compensated by the richness of the furniture.

Don Juan received us in a very handsome hall, where he introduced us to a lady whom he called his sister Dorothea, and who seemed to be about the age of nineteen or twenty. She was full dressed, because having expected our visit, she was desirous of appearing as amiable as she could; and offering herself to my view, in all her charms, she made the same impression that Antonia had made upon my heart; that is, I was disconcerted; but concealed my disorder so well, that Scipio himself did not observe it. Our conversation, like that of the preceding day, turned upon the mutual plea-

sure we should enjoy in visiting one another, and living together in good neighborhood. He did not, as yet, speak to us of Seraphina, and we gave him no encouragement to declare his passion, resolving that it should first come from himself. During the conversation, I frequently eyed Dorothea, though I affected to look at her as little as possible: and every time our eyes met, she darted fresh arrows into my soul. I must say, however, for the sake of truth, that this beloved object was not a perfect beauty; for, though her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, and her lips of the complexion of the rose, her nose was somewhat too long, and her eyes too little. Nevertheless the whole together quite enchanted me.

In short, I did not leave the castle of Jutella as I had entered it; and on my return to Lirias, my mind was so wholly possessed by Dorothea, that I saw nothing but her, and she was the sole subject of my conversation. "How, master!" said Scipio, looking at me with astonishment, "you are very full of Don Juan's sister. Hath she made a conquest of your heart?" "Yes, friend," answered I, "and I blush at my own weakness. O heavens! must I, who, since Antonia's death, have beheld a thousand beauties with indifference, meet with one at my age, who, in spite of all my endeavours, inflames me with love!" "Well, sir," replied Coscolina's son, "you ought to rejoice, instead of complaining at the adventure: there is nothing ridiculous in a man of your age

being in love; and time has not as yet so furrowed your brow, as to deprive you of the hope of pleasing. Take my advice, and when next you see Don Juan, boldly demand his sister in marriage; he cannot refuse her to such a person as you: and besides, if it is absolutely necessary that Dorothea's husband should be a gentleman, are not you one? You have letters of nobility, and that is enough for your posterity, when time shall have shrouded these letters with that thick veil which covers the origin of all great families: after four or five generations, the race of Santillane will be most illustrious."

CHAP. XIV.

THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE CELEBRATED AT LIRIAS, WHICH CONCLUDES THE HISTORY OF GIL BLAS DE SANTILLANE.

SCIPIO, by this discourse, encouraged me to declare myself the lover of Dorothea, without considering that he exposed me to the risk of a refusal: I could not, however, determine upon it without trembling; for, although I looked younger than I was, and could have sunk ten good years at least of my age, I could not help thinking I had good reason to doubt of my pleasing a young beauty. I resolved, nevertheless, to risk the demand, as soon as I should see her brother, who, for his part, being uncertain of obtaining my god-daughter, was not without abundance of anxiety.

He returned to my house next morning, just as I had done dressing, and said, "Signior de Santillane, I am come to-day to talk with you about a serious affair." I carried him into my closet, where, coming to the point at once, "I believe," continued he, "that you are not ignorant of my errand. I love Seraphina; and as you can sway her father to any thing, pray render him favorable to me; procure for me the object of my passion, and let me owe the happiness of

my life to you." "Signior Don Juan," answered I, "since you come to the business at once, give me leave to follow your example; and, after having promised you my good offices with the father of my god-daughter, to demand your interest with your sister in my behalf."

At these last words Don Juan expressed an agreeable surprise, from which I drew a favorable omen. "Is it possible," cried he, "that Dorothea made a conquest of your heart yesterday?" "I am quite charmed with her!" said I, "and will think myself the happiest of mankind, if my demand is agreeable to you both." "Of that you may be assured," he replied; "noble as we are, we will not disdain your alliance." "I am very glad," answered I, "that you make no difficulty in receiving a plebeian for your brother-in-law: I esteem you the more on that account; and in so doing, you shew your good understanding: but were you even so vain as to refuse your sister's hand to any body but a gentleman, know that I could satisfy your pride; I have laboured twenty years under the minister: and the king, to recompence the services which I have done the state, has gratified me with letters of nobility, which you shall see." So saying, I took my patent out of the drawer where it lay concealed, and presented it to the gentleman, who read it attentively, from beginning to end, with vast satisfaction. "This is excellent!"

said he, restoring the papers; "Dorothea is yours." "And you," cried I, "may depend upon Seraphina."

These two marriages being thus resolved upon, all that remained was to know if the brides would consent with a good grace; for Don Juan and I, being equally delicate, did not intend to force their inclinations. That gentleman returned therefore to his castle of Jutella, to propose me to his sister; and I assembled Scipio, Beatrice, and their daughter, to communicate the conversation I had with that cavalier. Beatrice was for accepting him without hesitation; and Seraphina, by her silence, shewed that she was of her mother's opinion. As to the father, he was not indeed averse to the match, but expressed some uneasiness about the dowry, which, he said, must be given to the gentleman, whose castle had such pressing need of repairs. I stopped Scipio's mouth, telling him, that affair concerned me, and that I would make a present to my god-daughter of four thousand pistoles for her portion.

Don Juan returned that very evening: "Your affairs," said I to him, "succeed to a miracle: I wish mine may be in no worse condition." "They are also on an excellent footing," he replied; "I had no occasion to employ authority to obtain Dorothea's consent: your person is to her liking, and she is pleased with your beha-

viour. You was apprehensive of your being disagreeable to her; and she is more justly afraid, at having nothing but her heart and hand to offer."—"What more would I have!" cried I, in a transport of joy: "since the charming Dorothea has no reluctance to unite her fate with mine, I ask no more: I am rich enough to marry her without a portion, and the possession of her alone will crown my wishes!"

Don Juan and I, very well pleased with having brought matters happily so far, resolved to hasten our nuptials, by suppressing all superfluous ceremonies. I brought this gentleman and Seraphina's parents together; and after they had agreed upon the conditions of the marriage, he took his leave, promising to return next day with Dorothea. The desire I had of appearing agreeable to that lady, made me employ three good hours, at least, in adjusting and adonizing myself; and yet, for all that, I could not make myself pleased with my own person. It is only a pleasure for a young man to prepare himself for visiting his mistress, but to one who begins to grow old, it is quite a fatigue. However, I was more happy than I deserved to be.

When next I saw Don Juan's sister, she regarded me with such a favorable eye, that I imagined myself still good for something. I had a long conversation with her, was charmed with her dis-

position; and concluded that, with delicate behaviour, and a great deal of complaisance, I should become a beloved spouse. Elevated with this agreeable hope, I sent to Valencia for two notaries, who drew up the contract of marriage; then we had recourse to the curate of Paterna, who came to Lirias, and married Don Juan and me to our mistresses.

Thus, for a second time, did I light the torch of Hymen, and had no cause to repent my conduct. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, made a pleasure of her duty; and, sensible of my care to anticipate her desires, soon attached herself to me, as much as if I had been a young man. On the other hand, Don Juan and my god-daughter were inflamed with mutual ardour; and, what is very singular, the two sisters-in-law conceived the most passionate and sincere friendship for one another. As for my part, I found so many good qualities in my brother-in-law, that I felt a real affection for him; and he did not repay it with ingratitude. In short, the union that reigned among us was such, that in the evening, when we parted, only till next day, that separation was not performed without pain: so that, of the two families, we resolved to make one, which should live sometimes at the castle of Lirias, and sometimes at that of Jutella, which, for this purpose, received great reparations, by the help of his excellency's pistoles.

I have for three years, gentle reader, led a

delicious life with people whom I love so much; and to crown my felicity, heaven has blessed me with two children, whom I piously believe to be my own, and whose education shall be the amusement of my old age.

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